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Edmund White on James Agee

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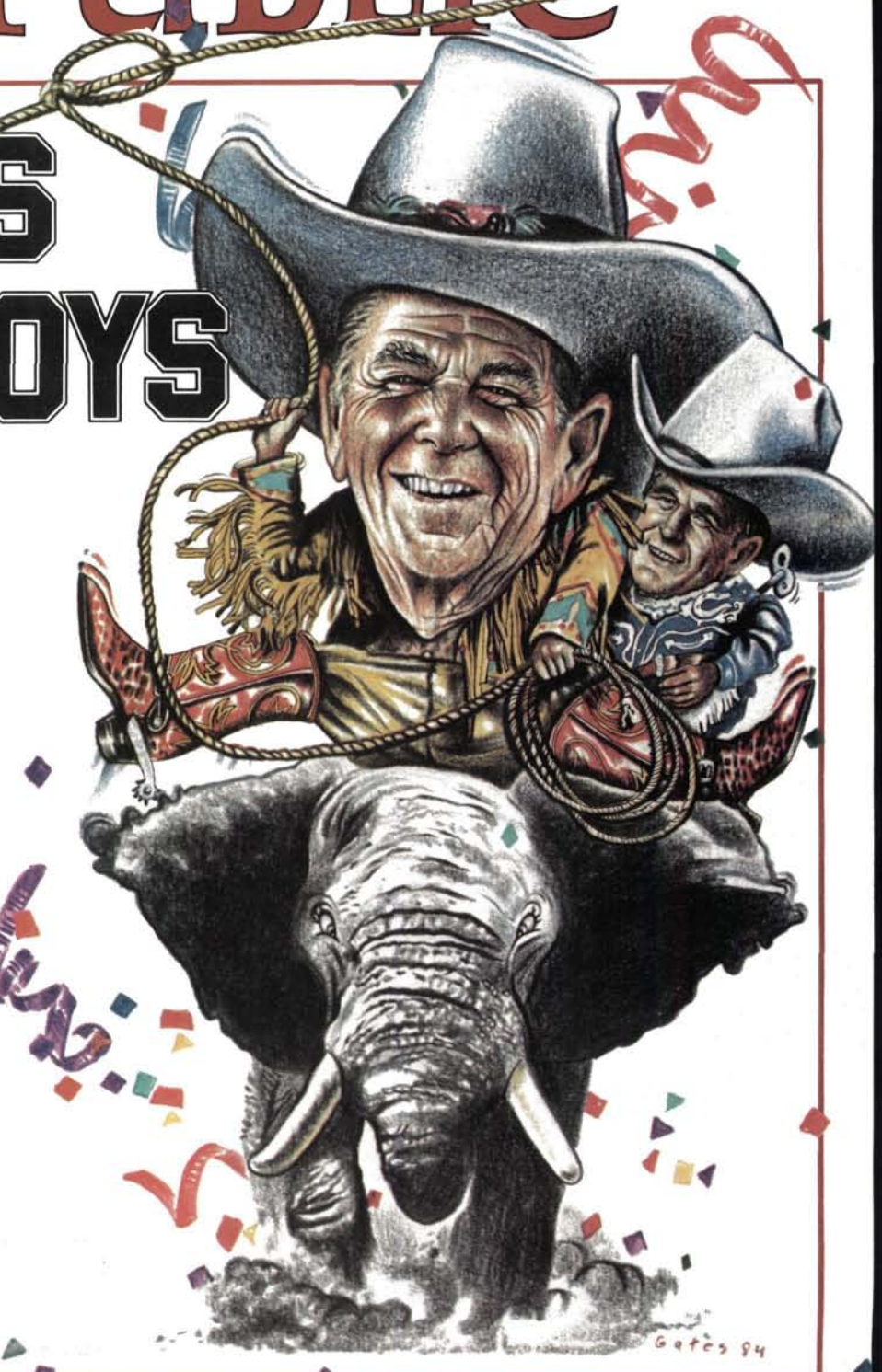
DALLAS COWBOYS



Cocky Reagan-Bush
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The C-Span Boys
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TV Tunes Out
The Editors

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CORRESPONDENCE

DEFENSE REALITIES

To the editors:

In your editorial, "Come To Order" (TNR, July 30), you cite the Democrats' call for a strong conventional defense and their criticism of high Republican defense spending as contradictory, alluding to "confusion" on national security issues. You add that "a renovation of American . . . conventional defenses will require precisely what the platform denounces as a 'Pentagon spending binge.' "

There is widespread public confusion on this issue, and it crosses party lines. It stems from two commonly held notions: (1.) that NATO forces are far behind the Warsaw Pact in conventional strength, and (2.) that massive military spending is good for the economy.

But in a recent comparison of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, the Council on Economic Priorities (C.E.P.) found that the Pact does *not* have the overwhelming conventional advantage long thought to exist. Indeed, NATO has a 1.16 to 1 advantage in terms of total ground forces, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. In addition, as Richard DeLauer, U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, points out, America's technological lead actually increased from 1982 to 1983, particularly in the vital areas of computers, radar, propulsion, and guidance and navigation systems. Measures to upgrade conventional U.S. forces are indeed needed, such as improvement of readiness, but they should not require large expenditures.

And there is no inherent contradiction between economic desires and desires for peace. In 1983 we compared seventeen advanced industrial nations over two decades. C.E.P. found that the more a country spent on the military as a portion of its economy, the slower its economic growth, the higher its unemployment, and the slower its productivity growth.

ALICE TEPPER MARLIN
Council on Economic Priorities
Washington, D.C.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

To the editors:

Most of what I know about the proposed sale of Conrail I learned from Bob Kuttner's article "The Great Train Robbery" (TNR, July 30). So I wish he'd clarify the following points:

He writes that Conrail is "in the black." Does that include any charge for the $7.6 billion that he says the taxpayers have invested in Conrail since 1976? If this money had taken the form of a long-term loan financed at 10 percent, then Conrail would be spending $760 million a year in debt servicing—which would more than wipe out the $400 million that Mr. Kuttner says it expects to earn in 1984. And as for the two private competitors that Conrail is giving "a run for their money," have they received comparable subsidies?

He recommends that Conrail remain a public enterprise "at least for the immediate future." Why just the immediate future? Why not forever? Would Mr. Kuttner sell Conrail once it goes out of "the black"? Or does he retain some doubts about trusting the government to run the operation without more subsidies from taxpayers, most of whom are probably poorer than the Conrail customers and employees they're helping to support?

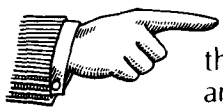
He specifically exempts the union bid to buy Conrail from his reasons for objecting to the other prospective buyers. But then we read no more about the union bid. Why does he consider the prospect of a worker-owned Conrail inferior to the status quo?

EUGENE EPSTEIN
New York, New York

Mr. Kuttner replies:

First, Conrail indeed is not paying interest on much of the $7.6 billion but most of that money was an equity investment, not a loan. Moreover, any private sector buyer of Conrail would not pay interest on it either. Second, I would be quite happy to see Conrail remain a public corporation indefinitely, as long as it continues to be well managed. Third, if Conrail is sold, it would certainly make the most sense to sell it to Conrail's own employees, as Mr. Epstein implies, but the Reagan Administration, characteristically, is not sympathetic to that course.

TO LEARN THE TRUTH ABOUT A GIN, GO TO A MARTINI.



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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

FIBBING FOR DOLLARS

CAUTION: shreiked the envelope in bright red. THE ENCLOSED INFORMATION IS EXTREMELY DAMAGING TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL. Oh my gosh! My first thought was to dash to the bathroom and douse it in a tub of water. Instead, I took a deep breath and opened what turned out to be a fund-raising appeal for North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, who is trying to knock Jesse Helms out of the Senate. The letter described Helms's copious anti-Israel activities.

This "package" (as they're called in the direct-mail business) was prepared by a Milwaukee firm called AB Data, which specializes in raising money on Jewish themes. The owners claim to have developed a unique computer program which can find the Jews in any mailing list. The process—they call it "ethnication"—uses surnames, zip codes, and comparisons with other lists.

For cynical manipulation, deception, and sheer malarkey, political mailings make even the wildest TV commercials look like models of Socratic discourse. Many of these techniques were developed by the magazine industry. Having been involved on both the editorial and business sides of magazines, I'm sometimes unnerved by the contrast between what you assume about your readers as a journalist and what you assume about your customers as a businessman. As a journalist, you assume your readers are intelligent, rational, discerning. As a businessman in search of those readers, you assume that they will really believe they've been specially selected to receive this limited offer; that they need a package full of little items to play with, such as a reply card that's too big for the return envelope unless they tear off a pointless stub; that they'll respond better to a long form letter with the word "you" several times in the first paragraph, occasional passages framed by little stars, and at least one "P.S." at the end. These are just a few standard tricks of the trade.

Richard Viguerie, the king of the New Right, pioneered the use of direct mail for political organizing and fund-raising. Conservative Republicans still lead the field. But liberals and Democrats are catching on and catching up.

Here is a package AB Data prepared for the reelection campaign of Michigan Senator Carl Levin. It's directed at people who've already contributed once, and the envelope says, "You have to be a little meshuga. . . ." Meshuga means crazy in Yiddish. The pitch, signed by Levin, is that he knows it's crazy to ask people for money a second time, but he's doing it anyway. Bruce Arbit of AB Data explains the theory behind claiming to be crazy while asking to be reelected to the United States Senate: "You're dealing with a man of incredibly high integrity, unflinchingly honest, and I think his donors appreciate that."

This nicely illustrates the difference between "honest" in the political consultant's sense of projecting an image and *honest* in the more traditional sense of telling the truth. Carl Levin is an honest pol, for a pol, but this letter is hardly proof. For one thing, he didn't really write it. For another, whoever did write it knows perfectly well that, far from being "meshuga," repeated dunning of people who've already given once is the essence of political direct mail. The first letter is called "prospecting," and almost always costs more than it brings in. The payoff comes when you hit up givers again. Roger Craver, the dean of Democratic mail mavens, says that in a typical campaign he hits a proven donor once a month until six months before the election, then two or three times a month until voting day. And then, like chattel slaves, the donors are rented out to new candidates and causes.

Craver proudly showed me his portfolio of fund-raising packages for the Democratic National Committee. Some of them are festooned with imitation rubber-stamp messages such as OFFICIAL BUSINESS or RUSH—MAIL WITHIN TEN DAYS. Several use the popular gambit of seeking the reader's opinion. OFFICIAL 1984 PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY BALLOT, says the outside of one, and inside

continued on page 42

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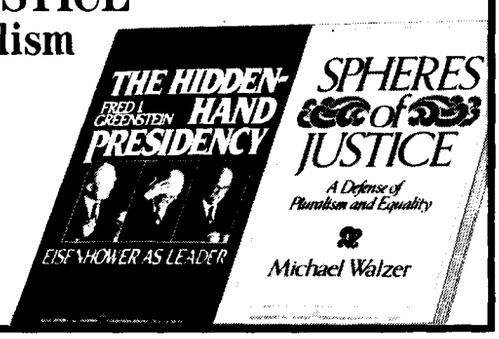

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
SEPTEMBER 3, 1984

THE BIG TUNE-OUT

On Monday, August 20, the Republican National Convention will be called to order in Dallas. On that first day, the delegates will hear from, among others, Frank J. Fahrenkopf Jr., the shadowy, efficient chairman of the Republican National Committee; LeGree (can that really be his name?) Daniels, chairman of something called the National Black Republican Council; Representative Phil Gramm, the Texas apostate; Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, the former Democrat who serves as President Reagan's ambassador to the United Nations; Senator Howard Baker, a probable candidate for President in 1988; Margaret Heckler, the Secretary of Health and Human Services; Representative Guy Vander Jagt, 1980's grandiloquent keynoter; and this year's keynoter, Katherine D. Ortega, signer of dollar bills and Treasurer of the United States.

Americans are entitled to feel some curiosity about each of these people. But those citizens who tune in to the network television coverage of the convention are likely to see and hear only two of them: Ms. Kirkpatrick, who undoubtedly will give those she regards as the softies in her erstwhile party pure unshirted hell; and Ms. Ortega, whose keynote address someone is sure to dub the Treasurer's Report. The rest of the television audience's time is likely to be taken up by a succession of already overexposed network correspondents and anchormen commenting on the predictability of it all and reporting to us and to each other that, in essence, "there's no story here."

"There's no story here." These happen to be the exact words used by a network news executive—specifically, David Burke, a vice president of ABC News and a very intelligent man—to describe the Democratic convention in San Francisco. Mr. Burke's contention is the first half of the case the networks have against the conventions—the other half being the ratings, which some network spokesmen have tried to bathe in an aura of plebiscitary democratic legitimacy. The network executives speak of low ratings for the conventions (though in fact the ratings have remained fairly steady ever since 1948, and have even gone up slightly since 1972). They do not yet dare to apply this standard to the President's State of the Union Address, but that day may come.

The bottom line, to use a phrase that is all too apt, is that there has been less network coverage of this year's conventions than of any year's since 1948. In 1980 the three networks devoted a total of about a hundred hours altogether to the two conventions. This year the time will be less than half that. In San Francisco, ABC brazenly cut away from the Democrats' second night to broadcast part of a rerun of "Hart to Hart," a show that is not about Gary and Lee. NBC wasn't crass enough to go that far this time, but NBC has made it clear that it intends to curtail its effort substantially next time. CBS, to its credit, is arguing against the trend toward ever more truncated coverage; but in the crunch, it will probably not resist. The Public Broadcasting System, which is more and more coming to resemble an electronic airline magazine, disgraced itself thoroughly. Although C-SPAN, the admirable cable-satellite public affairs network, had offered the system

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its uninterrupted gavel-to-gavel podium coverage free of charge, not a single one of the major public TV stations in the top ten markets accepted, according to a survey by Bob Brewin of the *Village Voice*. The only real bright spots were C-SPAN itself and the Cable News Network, which did the kind of job the big networks used to do. Come 1988, it's entirely possible that the three big networks will "cover" the conventions via late-night specials and occasional brief interruptions in their regular entertainment schedules.

THE CONTENTION that there was "no story" in San Francisco—and that there is no story in Dallas—makes sense only if one begins with the assumption that the only question worth asking is the identity of the Presidential and Vice Presidential nominees. That is a singularly unimaginative idea of what an American political convention is about. Granted, the role of the convention has changed over the years. The system of primaries, combined with campaign expenses so crushing that candidates are quickly squeezed out of the race, almost guarantees a first-ballot nomination known well in advance. Thanks to modern communications, the work of maneuver and compromise that used to occupy the convention now begins immediately after the last primary. But no story? Ridiculous. There were hundreds—no, thousands—of stories in San Francisco. All you had to do was look.

Gathered in Moscone Center were a couple of hundred members of Congress, nearly half the U.S. Senators, the majority of the governors, and just about all the big-city mayors in America. With them were ex-cabinet officers, high-powered lobbyists, power brokers, pollsters, and political consultants; also, dozens of nationally known political writers, columnists, even novelists like James A. Michener and Mary McCarthy; also, representatives of just about every organized group in the country, from American Indians to rural gays; also, just plain prominent citizens from every state in the Union; also, assorted celebrities like Margot Kidder, Warren Beatty, and young Ron Reagan, on assignment from *Playboy*. And also—not least—television's own star correspondents and commentators. This astonishing assemblage of people had gathered in one gigantic, noisy room, talking with each other, gossiping about each other, scheming against each other, joking with each other, and, when things got dull, looking up at the podium, where there was always somebody one had heard of but usually never seen trying to give the speech of his or her life.

No story? Even leaving aside the political "angle," this gaudy, excessive, profoundly American scene is a TV talent coordinator's dream. To put it in terms a network executive might be able to understand, an American political convention is a mammoth combination of the "The Tonight Show," the evening news, "Dynasty," "Queen for a Day," "People's Court," "This Is Your Life," "Saturday Night Live," and the biggest Phil Donahue Show imaginable.

In fact, the only thing more amazing than the convention scene itself was the networks' ability to turn it into dull television. The opening night of the Democrats' gathering is a case in point. CBS and ABC deigned to go to the podium only twice: for the speech by former President Jimmy Carter and for Governor Mario Cuomo's keynote address. NBC also broadcast part of Representative Mo Udall's introduction of Mr. Carter. Apart from floor interviews, which varied widely in interest and appositeness, the networks devoted the rest of their time to the already overexposed talking heads of various network personalities, many of whom affected a world-weary cynicism.

Only the floor interviews gave some hint of the roiling human bazaar on the convention floor. And although there was a succession of interesting, even fascinating, other speakers on the podium, the viewer got no clue of that. Is it not possible that the TV audience might have appreciated a sample of New York Mayor Ed Koch's twenty-minute rant against cocaine pushers? Or a taste of the talks by two women politicians who were considered for the Vice Presidential nomination, Mayor Dianne Feinstein of San Francisco and Governor Martha Layne Collins of Kentucky? Or a glimpse of the platform styles of Tom Bradley, Charles Manatt, Alan Cranston, Richard Hatcher, Julian Bond, Patricia Schroeder, Bill Clinton, or Coretta Scott King? Might it not have been worth at least mentioning, in view of all the talk about regional splits in the Democratic Party, that Governor Cuomo was introduced by his Texas counterpart, Mark White?

What television does really well, and what only television can do, is to show what is happening, as it is happening. The coverage of the conventions demonstrates that the network executives do not understand that their medium is best when it mediates least. Why else would they devote so much time to rambling colloquies between correspondents and anchors? These colloquies are not really journalism. They are proto-journalism, the equivalent of conversations between a newspaper's editors and its reporters. They are not the story or even the raw material for the story, but simply the editor's way of finding out if there is a story at all.

SHOWING SUCH STUFF when there is something real going on is a symptom of TV's narcissism. Another symptom is the complaint, voiced by some TV executives, that the conventions are no longer worth covering because they have become "media events." This complaint puts us in mind of the classic definition of *chutzpah*: the man who murders his parents and then demands mercy on the ground that he is an orphan. Of course the planners of conventions try to attract TV coverage, but that is not a convention's sole or even main *raison d'être*, at least as far as the participants are concerned. Tens of thousands of busy people do not travel halfway across the country just to serve as a studio audience for a television program—as the networks,

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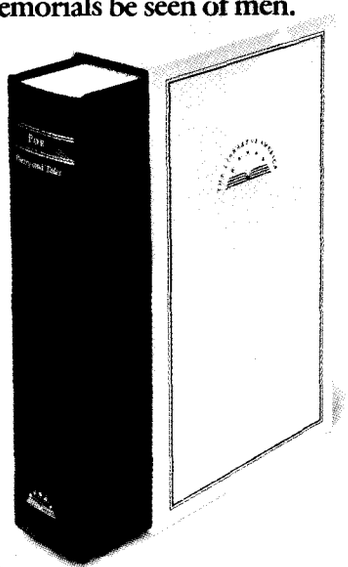
Ye who read are still among the living

...but I who write shall have long since gone my way into the region of shadows. For indeed strange things shall happen, and secret things be known, and many centuries shall pass away, ere these memorials be seen of men.
Shadow–A Parable, Edgar Allan Poe, 1843



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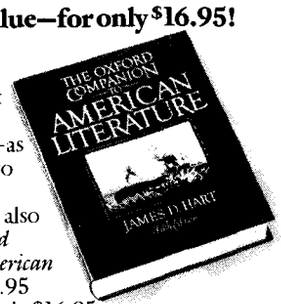

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which are obliged to employ shills to press game show tickets on reluctant tourists, ought to understand.

Still, the "media event" theme was one the networks harped on in San Francisco, constantly noting as news the party's effort to manipulate them. On the third night of the Democratic convention, for example, NBC's Roger Mudd reported that the party had asked the networks to move up their coverage by a half-hour, but that the networks had refused. Mr. Mudd reported why the request had been made—so that George McGovern's speech, Gary Hart's address, and Walter Mondale's nomination could all occur during "prime time"—but not why it had been turned down, which was the other half of the story. There were no badgering interviews with network executives to get the answer to that one.

AN ABC PRODUCER named Jeff Gralnick, perhaps by way of justifying his network's disgraceful performance, has been going around saying that the conventions are "dinosaurs." Leave aside the fact that the dinosaur, due to its great size and extreme rarity, is a most interesting beast. Is it really the conventions that are stumbling toward extinction? Or is it the networks? The network executives' inability to understand that the conventions are interesting is a confession of massive stupidity and lack of imagination. A network that can interrupt a political convention to show a rerun of an old detective serial thereby announces that it is ready for the boneyard. The networks are begging to be replaced—by videocassette recorders for entertainment, and, for news, by smaller, more maneuverable, less cynical, less star-choked cable operations.

No story? With all due respect, and not much is due, that is not for network executives to decide. The convention of a major American political party is not just another news item to be covered or not as some executive sees fit. Like it or not, the televised political convention has become part of the unwritten Constitution of the United States. Do "only" half the people watch conventions? Well, only half the people vote in elections. No doubt both institutions have their problems, but abolition is not the answer for either of them.

No story? But that is a journalistic judgment. Somehow we suspect that the decision to miniaturize convention coverage is being made on other grounds. Cutting back will allow the networks to make a good deal more money; but that has always been the case. Why do the networks suddenly feel free to indulge themselves? Might it not have something to do with the *zeitgeist*—with the I've-got-mine moral atmosphere that has coincided with the rule of the Reagan Administration? We have a government that has glorified the market, sanctified greed, devalued social goods, and legitimized contempt for public life. Is it any wonder the networks are insolent? There is a rumor that ABC has decided to reduce its coverage of the Republicans to an hour a night. Perhaps the other networks will follow suit. If it happens, a wee chicken will have come home to roost.

NOTEBOOK

□ 'BIG BROTHER BLUES,' a collection of the very sharp and funny editorial cartoons of Ben Sargent, has been published by Texas Monthly Press. Mr. Sargent's cartoons appear in *The Austin American-Statesman*, and he also draws regularly for TNR. (See, for instance, page 15.) The book may be ordered direct from the publisher, for $7.95 plus $2 postage and handling, from P.O. Box 1569, Austin, Texas 78767.

□ FIFTEEN YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "*Benares*: Millions of Hindus come to this holy city to wash away their sins in the Ganges, where bodies of babies and ashes of adults are tossed into the waters as an act of final redemption. Now on the banks of the holy river, near the flickering pyres of the dead, a billboard intrudes upon the ancient rites: TWO OR THREE CHILDREN—THAT'S ENOUGH! The message at Benares is the battle cry of the heavily U.S.-backed birth-control program in India. Buses, matchboxes, trains, calendars, rickshaws, cinemas, shopping bags, carnival banners, and post offices give Orwellian repetition to the slogan. But in an underdeveloped country where religion and family traditions emphasize reproduction, where many girls marry at 14 and have two or three children by the age of 20, implementing birth control is more difficult than convincing the Pope." ("The Ford Condom In India's Future," by Zalin B. Grant, September 6&13, 1969.)

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

SMUG IN DALLAS

THE REAGANITES are heading for Dallas supremely confident of their ability to defeat Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro. One might even say they are brash and overconfident, except that they have a lot to be confident about. Both public and private polls show the President leading Mondale by 14 or 15 points nationally, wiping out gains the Democrats made with their successful convention. State-by-state polling suggests that Reagan enjoys an overwhelming electoral vote advantage; one top Presidential adviser said it was "insurmountable." The Reaganites think Mondale has few issues going for him to begin with, and that he is botching his game strategically as well. They now think that, regardless of the outcome of the current controversy over Ferraro's finances, her selection will ultimately work to Reagan's advantage, gaining him more votes among traditionalist men than it helps the Democrats among women. Totting up all of Reagan's advantages, some of his aides are thinking not just about win-

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ning the 270 electoral votes it takes to get elected, but of going for 400-plus—a "mandate."

Such cockiness has a few Republicans worried. A respected young moderate-conservative member of Congress said, for example, "When you look at the fundamental situation—how liberal Mondale and Ferraro are in relation to the country, how much strain there is between the South and the other elements of the Democratic coalition, how hard it is for Mondale to get to 270 even if he carries the North—you think that the Democratic ticket ought to be sinking like a rock. But then you look at Santa Barbara, and you think, 'Jesus, this thing is not right.' " The reference, of course, is to the vacation White House in California, where Reagan and Vice President George Bush seemed not to be able to tell the same story on whether there will be a tax increase in a second Reagan term, where the President had to be prodded by his wife into remembering that he was doing all he can to negotiate with Russia, and where Reagan made a joke about starting a nuclear war in the voice test for his weekly radio broadcast.

WHITE HOUSE aides have lots of comforting explanations about Santa Barbara. "It's August," was one line. "We always make our mistakes in August." A corollary explanation is that when he's on vacation, Reagan gets away from his top advisers, they also go on vacation, and White House communications break down, leading to "goofs." One White House aide said, "the public expects small mistakes from us. The only way Mondale is going to win is if there is a big mistake, a really big one."

This official does not think that Reagan has made any such mistake in the sparring with Mondale over deficits and taxes. To the contrary, the President's staff thinks that Mondale's vow to raise taxes next year works to Reagan's overall advantage. "All of our tactical bumbling can't undo his strategic mistake," one aide told me. "Instead of playing to our weakness, which is on the war-peace issue, Mondale tried to attack our strengths, which are that we have cut taxes and have produced an economic recovery and that we have a President who is believable. Mondale obviously is trying to raise the deficit issue, but deficits are an abstraction to people, while tax cuts and growth are realities."

Moreover, according to Reagan campaign aides, Republican polls indicate that 69 percent of American voters believe that Mondale would not use increased tax revenues to narrow the deficit, but to fund his promises to Democratic constituent groups. "Every time Mondale talks about taxes," one campaign official said, "it's a free ad for us." The Reagan plan is to use convention speeches and the Republican platform to make the point that Mondale favors higher taxes as a "first resort," while for Reagan they are a desperately to-be-avoided "last resort."

The Reagan campaign is convinced that Mondale has made a grave error in promising to write a plan to reduce the deficit by two-thirds by fiscal year 1989. Reagan advisers say that Mondale is almost duty-bound to base his plan on the pessimistic deficit estimate of the Congressional Budget Office—$265 billion—which means that he will have to come up with spending cuts and tax increases totaling nearly $180 billion. How can he do so, and at the same time keep his promises not to touch entitlement programs, not to cut the defense budget deeply, not to increase corporate taxes, and not to raise taxes for the middle class? The Reaganites are certain he can't, and they already have worked out budget tables to show why not.

In addition to offering an opportunity to bash Mondale on fiscal policy, the Republican convention is designed to be a celebration of Reagan's claimed success in economics and foreign policy and an appeal to constituencies—notably, women and Hispanics—where the Reaganites think their man needs shoring up. The convention keynoter, U.S. Treasurer Katherine Ortega, is supposed to appeal to both constituencies at once and in very personal terms to make the larger point that hard work and individual effort pay off. United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, a registered Democrat, is supposed to demonstrate that women have been given more than token jobs in the Reagan Administration and to assert that Reagan foreign policy has made the world safer. The Reaganites hope that Kirkpatrick also will advance their strategy of attracting disaffected conservative Democrats and Jews.

Reagan convention planners have created other sideshows, such as a patriotic extravaganza borrowed from the Olympics and "1988 night" on Tuesday, when various future Presidential possibilities—Representative Jack Kemp, Senator Bob Dole, and Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole, his wife—will address the gathering. The high points of the convention, however, are to be President Reagan's acceptance speech and the eighteen-minute movie that introduces it, which was written by Phil Dusenberry, the advertising executive who created the "Pepsi Generation" campaign and who wrote the screenplay for the movie, *The Natural*. Both movie and speech are supposed to bring tears to the eyes of the audience—the Reagan-Bush campaign is fighting with the TV networks to get them to carry the film, as they did Senator Edward Kennedy's introduction of Walter Mondale—and to "make you proud to be an American," as one campaign official put it.

SOME Republicans worry that the party and the Administration are coasting along too much on style, symbolism, and the Reagan record, are avoiding substance and ideas, and are getting so complacent that it will seem that Reagan is not willing to fight for people's votes. My Congressional friend says, for example, that the President and the platform should flatly rule out any tax increase, even though Congress may force one on the President next year. "Too many of the President's advisers are worrying about policy in the next term," he said. "They forget that there's an election to be won first."

In fact, most of the Reagan people do think the election is all but won. "I can think of 27 different ways that we can win this election," said one top campaign official. "There

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is not a single state that it's absolutely necessary for us to win. I don't see any way that Mondale can do it without carrying Illinois and Texas, and we're ahead in both places." In Texas, both Republican and Democratic polls reportedly show Reagan with a lead of 20 points.

Reagan campaign officials think that Mondale and Ferraro are committing strategic blunders by campaigning so intensively in the South and in California, violating the supposedly iron rule that candidates should shore up their own base first—in the Democrats' case, that would be the Northeast and Midwest—and then try to make gains elsewhere. At the moment, the "Sunbelt" states of the South and West seem far out of reach for Mondale and Ferraro. Reagan is leading in California by 17 points, according to Democratic polls, and Reagan's surveys showed Reagan leading in the South (including liberal Maryland) by a margin of 54 percent to 38 even after intensive campaign tours by Mondale and Ferraro. The CBS-*New York Times* poll showed Reagan leading in the South by 49 to 32 and in the West by 54 to 31.

The Reaganites also scoff at the idea that black registration drives and appearances by Jesse Jackson can win the South for Mondale. "The bottom line," one campaign official said, "is that we are pulling 69 percent of the white vote in the South and what you need to win is 63 or 64. Jesse Jackson has already registered almost all the blacks in the South that he's going to. His efforts to register more will only help us with whites. Last year Democrats were out-registering us 4 to 1 in the South, but this year we are out-registering them by 3 to 1 and even 7 to 1 in some states."

THE REAGANITES are so supremely confident, in the end, because of this electoral mathematics: if they carry California, Florida, and Texas; the rest of the West minus Oregon and Washington; the rest of the South minus West Virginia and Arkansas; and add the normally Republican states of Indiana, New Hampshire, Kansas, and Nebraska, they have 263 electoral votes. To go over the top, they have to carry only one of the five remaining large states—Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York—or even a smaller state like Missouri or New Jersey. Reagan is leading so handily all over the country—by 49 to 35 in the Midwest and 45 to 39 in the Northeast, according to CBS—that it's only natural for campaign officials to think about going for a "blow out" of 1980 proportions. So far, however, the dominant inclination in the campaign is to work on 270 first and see later in the campaign if bigger things are possible.

Besides the electoral math, the Reagan people are confident that Mondale-Ferraro can be portrayed as superliberals based on their Congressional voting records, that Ferraro will strike working-class men as overly brassy even in her own home region, and that Ferraro's refusal to release her husband's income tax returns will damage the Democratic ticket's ability to reclaim the "traditional values" issue. They are also pleased to note that the President runs strongest with the youngest group of voters, the 18-to-30 cohort, suggesting that 1984 may start a long-term Republican era.

"We have two enemies," one of Reagan's top campaign aides said on his way to Dallas. "One is apathy and the other is complacency. There is always a banana peel out there, and there are more Democrats in this country than Republicans. We could have another 1948. We're conscious of it." Actually, the Reaganites seem conscious of overconfidence only when their euphoria is rudely interrupted by a question about overconfidence. In spite of all of Reagan's enormous advantages, he might be better off if he and his campaign were a little scared. Republican hubris may be the Democrats' best hope this year.

MORTON KONDRACKE

POST CARD

HYPE CITY

Dallas

TO GET to Fred Meyer's office at the top of the brand-new San Jacinto Tower, you take an Otis Elevonic 401 elevator with a digital message board (WHEN WAS DISNEYLAND OPENED? 29 YEARS AGO TODAY.) and a computerized voice system that tells you what floor you're on, and get off on the twenty-ninth floor. Then you turn a corner and take the penthouse elevator (sans voice and messages) to the thirty-second floor. You ascend to the thirty-third floor by a winding, blue-carpeted, green marble staircase set off by a mammoth crystal chandelier. From there through the windows you can see sundry new office towers sprouting like urban stalagmites around you. If Dorothy had taken a meeting with the Wizard in Dallas instead of Oz, this is how she would have arrived.

Meyer, president of the Tyler Corporation, is a skinny, intense, red-haired dynamo who serves as chairman of the Dallas County Republican Party and heads the Republican Host Committee for the Republican Convention. On the day we meet, Walter Mondale, Sister Boom Boom, and the rest are cavorting in San Francisco, and Meyer is reveling in the contrast with Dallas. "This is a great environment, a great milieu in which to display the values of President Reagan and the Republican Party," he says. "We are free-enterprise oriented. We are private-sector oriented. We are entrepreneurial oriented. The economy of the future is right here."

He takes a call about an upcoming fund-raiser, and goes on without missing a beat. "We're not going to be able to spend $20-$25 for unskilled and semi-skilled labor when there are a lot of people around the world who are willing to do those jobs for $3, $4, and $5. This is economic reality.

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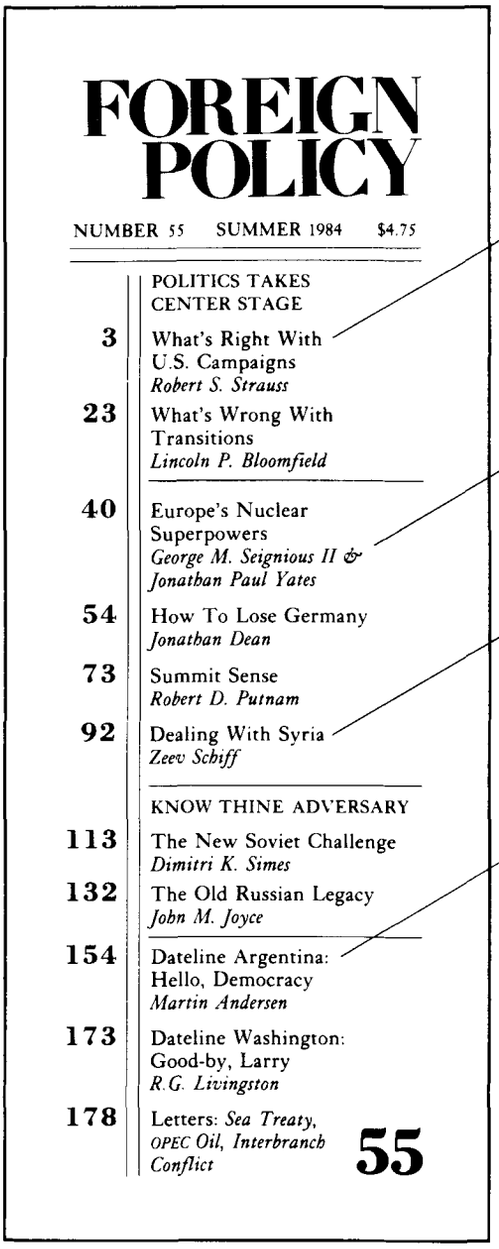

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Those are the facts. We have to be in high-tech areas, the education-based areas, and that's Dallas. . . . We're not all peaches and cream, but we've got a lot more peaches and cream than anyone else does."

Obviously the Republicans are coming to the right place. Fred Meyer is no rube; he's a Harvard M.B.A. who has been written up in *The Washington Post* as one of the savviest Republican operatives in the country. It's just that he's got Dallas's version of happy feet; he was born to be a free enterpriser, and he wants the world to know. If you can caricature the Democrats in Sister Boom Boom and the two hundred thousand trade unionists and gays who marched at the start of the Democratic Convention, Dallas is Republicanism *in excelsis*. The Republican Convention here isn't meant to be a political gathering so much as a religious pageant, a four-day parable about the virtues of the free enterprise system and of Dallas itself, the largest Republican urban area in the nation.

DALLAS HAS always had the feel of a somewhat nutty prairie duchy, full of ambitious entrepreneurial schemes and grandiloquent self-promotion. Back in 1872, when Dallas had about two thousand residents, *The Fort Worth Democrat* reported, "The first thing that children are taught to speak is 'Hurrah for Dallas!' " and it's been that way ever since. For most of this century, Dallas was ruled by the Dallas Citizens Council, two hundred fifty businessmen who from 1937 to the mid-1970s ran the city by fiat. They picked candidates, decided on bond projects, set the civic agenda, and acted as a tidy, unchallenged, reasonably enlightened business oligarchy. The Citizens Council lost much of its power with the advent of single-member districts, but its operative principle is still in effect. Businessmen rule Dallas, and there's no place else in the country where business success is quite so revered.

Dallas's great clarion call these days, repeated ad nauseam, is that Dallas is becoming "a truly international city," and the convention is supposed to be Dallas's international showcase. No one seems to know exactly what an international city is, but it doesn't seem to have much to do with the illegal Mexican aliens, Vietnamese, and Cambodians shoehorned into East Dallas shacks. Dallas's preconvention international showcase was the first running of the Dallas Grand Prix auto race. It was one of the city's typically murderous summer days, and only eight of the twenty-five cars even finished the race; one driver was treated for heat exhaustion after he collapsed while trying to push his car across the finish line. Still, the event had enough cosmopolitan panache that Mayor Starke Taylor boasted, "If there is any doubt in anyone's mind that we are truly an international city, we certainly have dispelled that." This is a city where the hype never stops.

The international pitch is good for business, but what Dallas really aspires to be is the capital of the Sunbelt—and that's Dallas's real message at the convention. "We want to look like sweet, neat, non-urban America's favorite city," said one city hall bureaucrat. And in a race Republicans like to see as the watershed battle of old America (F.D.R. liberals from New York and Minnesota) versus new America (Reagan conservatives from California and Texas), the Republicans probably picked their most sympathetic host city.

AS BEFITTING a city of free enterprisers, this is a free enterprise convention—sort of. The idea was that no local tax dollars would be used to pay for the convention, but the city is spending $22,000 a month on the salaries of officials working on the convention, it's doing $4 million in street improvements, and it figures to get some of the extra $2 million appropriated by Congress to the parties for this year's conventions. Still, most of the money has come from the Dallas Convention Fund, which plans to raise $3.9 million from private and corporate donors to cover Dallas's convention costs.

The city has done its entrepreneurial turn by cutting a deal with the Republicans in which it must approve all Republican souvenirs and gets a piece of the profits. The highlight so far has been a G.O.P. souvenir catalogue, which offers, among other things, a $60 set of gold Cross pens bearing the Great Seal of the United States, a $500 Royal Doulton coffee mug in the shape of Reagan's head, and a $2,500 bronze sculpture of a family of elephants with Reagan's signature and thumbprint on the base.

All this free enterprising has its limits. Private fundraising went a little slowly at first, but one hundred business leaders showed up at a downtown bank and pledged almost $600,000 in an hour in July, putting things back on course. They didn't have much to lose. Thanks to some concerted Dallas lobbying in Washington, all contributions are 100 percent tax deductible, a comforting sign that the private sector knows how to keep its intellectual zeal within reasonable bounds.

Dallas has never hosted a national convention before, and more than fifteen thousand volunteers have signed up to make this one a success. Even Dallas's punks have warned their mohawked brethren in California not to come to Dallas to cause trouble. The main killjoys in town are a motley group of protestors calling themselves the Dallas March And Rally Committee. The committee is a largely Texas-based coalition of liberals, left-wingers, gay rights supporters, and anti-nuclear activists. They are planning to protest Reagan and virtually everything he stands for. The trouble is, most of Dallas loves Reagan and everything he stands for, and the protesters are viewed as warmly as a bunch of boors tracking mud through an opera house.

When the city realized that it couldn't ignore them completely, it graciously offered them a campsite eighteen miles from downtown. This set off a spate of legal jousting, and finally the city offered them a site on the banks of the Trinity River at the edge of downtown, a wasteland usually populated by mosquitos, chiggers, and an occasional wino or stripped stolen car. That deal almost fell through when cattlemen planning to use the Trinity for a gala convention cattle drive said they didn't want their

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livestock to be subjected to the protestors ("A protester and a dissident and a cow ain't going to mix," said one right-thinking cattleman), but the city found a way to put protesters and livestock on opposite sides of the river. Another flap arose when the protesters demanded sanitary facilities. Mayor Taylor, in an inspired gesture of imperial disgust, said he'd pay for them out of his own pocket.

Dallas desperately wants to be loved, and it's primping for the convention like a teenager preparing for her first date. It's not going to be easy. Dallas's incessant self-promotion and free enterprise rhetoric will be a bit much for the Eastern-dominated press, it's going to be too hot to enjoy anything (*average* August daily highs are around 97 degrees), and the convention is going to be the most boring in history. After a summer featuring the Democrats and the Olympics, everyone will have had enough of media extravaganzas. On the other hand, Dallas's claims about being the capital or at least the exemplar of Sunbelt values are no mere boast. Dallas's most extreme right-wing nut mentality still crops up now and then. One councilman recently suggested the best way to deter criminals is to "hang somebody on the courthouse steps." But on the whole, this is a remarkably successful and livable city. The nation's seventh largest, it trailed only Los Angeles in building activity last year. The unemployment rate is 3.9 percent, and the city recently lowered property taxes by 4.2 percent while increasing its total budget by 9 percent. When the Chamber of Commerce polled citizens last year, more than 75 percent rated the area's quality of life as "good" or "excellent." There are signs that Dallas may eventually choke in its own ill-planned, manic growth, and its prosperity has barely touched the city's black ghettos. But for the most part there's an optimism and energy here that's astonishing.

Dallas is Reaganism in its purest form, a place with an almost Darwinian regard for those at the top of the heap and indifference to those on the bottom. As such, it does not regard its own prosperity lightly. "This is not the Washington-Baltimore-Philadelphia-New York-Boston axis," says Meyer. "This is not the world recorded in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. That's no longer the political or intellectual center of the United States. It's moved South and it's moved West. We have different values and different orientation."

It's a message that might not play in New York or Washington, but it plays well enough in Peoria; Dallas's loudest boosters are often transplants like Meyer, who grew up in Illinois. Liberals won't like the morality play Dallas is putting on, but Meyer is right. This is an important city which has a very different agenda from life on the East Coast. And, like it or hate it, only a fool would ignore it.

PETER APPLEBOME

Peter Applebome is senior editor at *Texas Monthly*.

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What would Indiana Jones do?

REAGANISM ON FAST-FORWARD

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

"SPECIAL ORDERS" used to be the dead zone of the House of Representatives. After official business is finished, any legislator can hear his words echo in the deserted chamber to his heart's content. Last year, it dawned on a group of aggressive young conservatives that even when the day is done the camera is still on. They realized that if they filled the "special orders" time slot, they would have their own nationally televised show on C-SPAN, the cable network which broadcasts House sessions. "The best Arbitron rating we have," says Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, "is that a quarter-million people are watching at any given minute."

Gingrich and his confederates had been trying hard to influence Ronald Reagan, but were having difficulty gaining access. Except in carefully managed situations they were kept away by wary aides, who wished to protect their chief not only from inflammatory visitors but from overwork in general. In the afternoons they sent him upstairs to the White House living quarters, where he did what he usually does when left to his own devices: he turned on the television. One day, flipping the channels with his remote-control tuner, the Great Communicator made a connection: *Live* from Capitol Hill, the Not-Ready-For-Prime-Time C-SPAN boys! The President, to whom flamboyant conservative rhetoric is pure protein, grabbed for his telephone. "The White House staff protects him from us by sending him upstairs, and he watches us on television," smirks Gingrich. "It saves us the cab fare."

The moment that Reagan met the C-SPAN boys, a spark of electricity leapt across the generational divide of the conservative movement. For two decades conservatives have battled with traditional Republicans for primacy within the Republican Party. This fight is increasingly taking on a generational cast. "When you think about political action, don't think about what John Wayne would do," Gingrich tells crowds of cheering Young Republicans. "Think what Indiana Jones would do!"

The C-SPAN boys are one corner of a bigger picture. A great struggle is coming, and some of the most influential younger Republicans—in the White House, the Reagan-Bush Committee, the Congress, the political consultant firms—are devoting a great deal of thought and energy to understanding its shape. Many of them look to Representative Jack Kemp as Reagan's true heir. But they are not much concerned with individual politicians, including Reagan. They uniformly believe that beyond the intra-party strife lies a more momentous contest for the loyalty of the volatile new generation. The ultimate conflict, as they see it, is not within the parties between generations. It is between the parties within the new generation.

The first generation of conservatives to which the contemporary movement can trace its lineage emerged in the 1940s and early 1950s. It was a fringe of isolated figures, such as Whittaker Chambers, Frederich von Hayek, and Russell Kirk, who, like medieval monks, kept the illuminated manuscripts in what they saw as a long dark age. Some were certain the West was lost to a new "serfdom"; all viewed the future as utterly bleak. The second conservative generation, spanning roughly the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, felt impelled to make its case to a broader public. Advocates such as William F. Buckley Jr. and Barry Goldwater still considered liberalism dominant; yet they believed it could be challenged. They knew they had a political base, and they thought they could take over the Republican Party. They weren't sure, however, that they had a majority in the country. In the mid-1960s, a dazzling star rose on the horizon when Reagan became governor of California. As President, he has become the fulfillment of the conservatives' wish for redemption; he is their justification, their roots. To the third generation of conservatives, liberalism is decadent, obsolete, on the brink of being eradicated. The future, they believe, belongs to them.

That future appears in three guises. First, there's "the future"—"a vision of a very different America," according to Gingrich. The young conservatives are enraptured with the laser light show of high technology. And they believe that this technology can somehow revive traditional society, turning the global village into one giant straitlaced small town. This is back to basics with micro-chips, Reaganism on fast-forward.

Then there is the future under Reagan. They must reelect the President, or risk losing their legitimacy. "Reagan has to have a successful second term, or else a lot of us will be retired for a long time," says Jeffrey Bell, an official of Citizens for America, a conservative activist organization. Yet Reagan, for them, is not the

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culmination of history or the end of ideology; he is the beginning. And after Reagan looms the tumultuous succession crisis of 1988. The past and the future are sacred to the young conservatives; it's the present that's profane.

Almost all of the C-SPAN boys arrived in Washington as a result of Republican sweeps in 1978 and 1980. They were initially dubbed "Reagan's Robots" because they mechanically voted the party line. Last year, however, the "robots" came to life and started running wild in the House. "We're moving from *Advise and Consent* to *Flashdance*," says Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota, one of the group's key strategists.

Baiting that white-maned bear, Speaker Tip O'Neill, is the C-SPAN boys' favorite sport. During one of the C-SPAN shows, in mid-May, Gingrich denounced by name House liberals he claimed were soft on communism. The next week O'Neill retaliated by having the cameras scan the empty galleries, puncturing the illusion that the conservative orators had the ears of their colleagues. Then O'Neill charged that Gingrich's assault on members' "Americanism" was the "lowest thing that I have ever seen in my thirty-two years in the House." Because his attack was personally aimed at Gingrich, the Speaker was declared out of order. That night this extraordinary incident elevated the C-SPAN boys from the cable ghetto to the network news. They were ecstatic. "Tip O'Neill," says Gingrich, "is an arrogant, overbearing boss. He sounds like a 1930s movie. Our policies of confrontation have begun to achieve results when policies of reasonableness have not."

DRAWING BY BEN SARGENT FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But there's reason to their madness. Given the propensity of voters to split their ballot, votes for Reagan can't be expected to translate into votes for other Republicans. Moreover, according to the calculations of an influential House Republican leader, "We'll lose 45 seats in 1986 in the normal course of events." The frustration of perennial minority status has led six senior Republicans to refuse to run for almost certain reelection. Imbued with the spirit of triumphal Reaganism, the C-SPAN boys reject this fate.

In February 1983, a group of less than six young Congressmen began meeting regularly. "We were not close friends," says Weber. "We observed in each other a more confrontational style towards the Democrats." Soon the group expanded to more than a dozen committed members. Each week they discuss books (John Naisbitt's *Megatrends*, Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave*, Paul Johnson's *Modern Times*) and plan their provocations. The notion of turning C-SPAN into an ideological instrument is only one tactic. Another is constantly to force votes on polarizing issues such as school prayer or trade with Communist nations. The C-SPAN boys don't actually anticipate winning. They want to build a record that Democrats would have to take some pains to explain to voters. If these divisive roll calls also happen to place moderate Republicans in a precarious position, so much the better.

The C-SPAN boys are conducting an experiment in consciousness raising. Gingrich, a former history professor at Western Georgia State, mixes references to Zen with talk of the Founding Fathers. He is the group's acknowledged philosopher king. "There are very long-term rhythms of nature in Taoism," he explains. "I have a real sense of history, in the sense that I'm comfortable with a ten-to-fifteen-year process. The rhythm I'm establishing drives my colleagues crazy. When you permeate the culture with your ideas, the culture will govern itself. It goes back to Lao-tzu. If our ideas are better and generate energy, we'll have more recruits to govern America than the old, closed, passive party. Our ideas will achieve primacy. That's part of the Taoist tradition." As such talk paradoxically shows, this is a peculiarly American brand of conservatism. Its animating notion isn't preservation but change, a legacy of a movement that was virtually born yesterday.

The name the C-SPAN boys prefer to travel by is the Conservative Opportunity Society, a label and a goal. "We believe the country and the world are in a tremendous

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state of transition," says Vin Weber. "The global economy, the technological revolution—we look at that and we think it requires a major political change. The experiment launched by Franklin Roosevelt, that concept of the liberal welfare state, is no longer appropriate. Basic assumptions have to be rethought. The Democratic Party has become the defender of the institutions it's built and of the coalition that's grown up around those institutions. When the earth moves, that party finds it hard to adapt to change. For them to rip loose, appraise things objectively, and become the party of transition is hard. Gary Hart was right on target. The message of his defeat is that that party is interwoven with the status quo and that its candidate can't react to the changes happening. Our party has the flip side of that problem. We have been the party of opposition for fifty years. Moderate Republicans have accepted all of the Democrats' premises. Their normal reaction is a modification of the agendas. The Democrats say paint the room yellow. The moderates say paint it pale yellow. The conservatives say don't paint it. We depend on the Democrats for our existence. If we're going to take advantage of the transition we have to change our role. We know the minority mind-set and the Democrats' ideology are bankrupt. Our party hasn't fully responded to that bankruptcy."

TO FILL the intellectual vacuum, Gingrich has just published a futurist's manifesto entitled *Window of Opportunity*. He unveils a conservatism nobody has ever seen before. For his book is a hymn to post-industrialism, as he understands it. He lays out a vast government-initiated industrial policy for outer space, where he dreams of moon factories and travel to the "Hiltons and Marriotts of the Solar System." He hails the "information-age work ethic," worker self-management, even worker ownership. And he disparages hierarchical management as typical of counterproductive "linear thinking." "The opportunity society," he writes, "calls not for a laissez-faire society in which the economic world is a neutral jungle of purely random individual behavior, but for forceful government intervention on behalf of growth and opportunity." Gingrich asserts that the consequence of the "scientific marvel" will be a "resurgence of traditional values." His argument is marked by a confusion of realms. He seeks the Holy Grail through the computer, as though endless invention will lead us to a society sanctified by Jerry Falwell. Technology always disrupts the conditions that have sustained traditionalism. Machine culture is value-free, and this neutrality itself has a secular bias. Gingrich, however, is unfamiliar with the classical conservative pessimism about technology; he offers no lament about the Virgin and the Dynamo. So he seeks a devil, and finds it—"a liberal elite" of "deviant beliefs." He wants to purge both the economy and society of decadence, which apparently has its origin in liberalism. Gingrich wants fair-minded consideration in the marketplace of ideas, but he practices a self-indulgent paranoid style in characterizing those with whom he disagrees. He is an astounding fusion of imagination and lack of imagination. Still, his rendering of "the future" carries the conservative movement parsecs beyond its conventional categories. Turn on, tune in, take over!

MEANWHILE, in a different region of the galaxy—Buffalo, New York—Jack Kemp is preparing for a more earthbound future. Occasionally he attends the C-SPAN boys' meetings, but he has his own agenda, all of which they've embraced. Kemp, however, tends to disdain their futurism and their harsher tactics. "I think Gingrich is wrong going after Tip on an ad hominem basis," he says. "It should be less personal and more on the ideas." He wants to be both a radical and a team player. Desite his early attachment to the supply-side cause, he has a natural caution, having passed up two good chances to run for higher office. And he would like to avoid a pigeonhole. (He substitutes "American" for "Conservative" when discussing the "Opportunity Society.") He's several years older than most of the C-SPAN boys, and he came to the House in 1970, an eon ago. He is a bridge between conservative generations, a Young Turk to the elders and an elder statesman to those younger.

More than any other politician, Kemp changed the way Republicans think about economics. His blue-collar suburban district has forced him to appeal to the traditional Democratic base. He has had to contend with urban blight, declining smokestack industries, and racial friction. The old Republican remedies were insufficient for reelection. He sought another rationale. He discovered the supply-siders, a sect of economists preaching a doctrine of tax cuts, free markets, and boundless growth. Almost at the instant that it was explained to him, he became its leading political exponent. The supply-siders, in their enthusiasm, wanted to run Kemp for President in 1980. He played Hamlet with such unintentional skill that Reagan's campaign manager, John Sears, became nervously preoccupied with his ambition. At the time, Reagan was peddling the bitter Republican medicine of austerity. He had always liked Kemp, who once served as his aide in California. In the movies, Reagan's favorite role was "the Gipper," because he once aspired to sports immortality. Kemp had been an authentic professional quarterback, the young hero Reagan himself had wanted to be. Kemp is Reagan's cultural and ideological son. He became the seller, Sears the distributor, and Reagan the buyer of the sunny supply-side prescription. Kemp renounced the campaign he never really mounted, and Reagan became the candidate of new ideas. Kemp kept building the movement, and inducted into the supply-side cabal a young Congressman named David Stockman. Partly through Kemp's influence, Stockman was appointed director of the Office of Management and Budget. In the early Reagan years, when recession and deficits appeared instead of the predicted boom, Stockman became disillusioned. Kemp, who had ridden the Laffer Curve to national prominence,

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was shut out of the White House. Then came the recovery, and the doors opened again.

Kemp argued that the recession had been caused by the incompletion of the supply-side program. Tax cuts were only half a loaf. The economy had declined because the Federal Reserve, following the monetarists' doctrine of progress through pain, strangled the money supply. In its place, he urged the return of the gold standard. Only then, he believed, would his populist economics be whole and prosperity assured. "Fed-bashing" became the order of the day, with the central bank the symbol of the elite against the people.

Whatever the merits of Kemp's critique of the Fed, his solution is an atavistic version of monetarism. Gold is the M1 of the past. The populists of the last century railed against the "Cross of Gold" and advocated the free coinage of silver. And whatever the merits of their case, this solution was a monomaniacal panacea which crushed all other reform issues. "Free silver is the cowbird of the reform movement," wrote the populist journalist Henry Demarest Lloyd. The gold standard is the cowbird of the conservative movement today, Bryanism on rewind.

Kemp's economic plan—no tax increases, a flat tax, and the gold standard—have become articles of faith for the young conservatives. Just as Kemp gave Reagan a program for his first term, he hopes to do so for his second. And this would position Kemp for the next term.

For Republicans, Reagan is now Mao. Everyone speaks in the name of the helmsman, quoting the Red Book. But behind the huge poster, behind the cult of personality, a hundred factions bloom. When Mao went on his long retreat he was planning another leap forward, another cultural revolution. But when Reagan goes on retreat, he rests, to return as the vehicle of others' ideas.

For the young conservatives the debate over the Republican platform has been a chance to demonstrate their firepower. Walter Mondale's call for tax increases enormously enhanced their position. To them, Mondale has roughly the same economic program as their traditional Republican nemesis, Senator Bob Dole. In 1976 Vice Presidential candidates Mondale and Dole debated hotly. Now their convergence neatly fits the conservatives' theories and needs. By digging in against tax increases, they deepen the schism within the party to their advantage. Moreover, this foreshadows another round of confrontations in the House, which also serves their purpose. On August 13, at a platform subcommittee, the young conservatives engaged the opposition, including the agents of Ronald Reagan, who wanted the platform to give the President ambiguous leeway on taxes. Gingrich, Weber, and Kemp emerged triumphant. In a sense, this was the first primary of 1988. "Intellectually the establishment has been defeated," says Kemp. "The question is who will win politically."

REAGAN, of course, isn't superannuated yet. His victory is a necessary precondition to the young conservatives' rise. He made possible their existence in the first place, shattered the party establishment, and remains the father. They must compete for the new generation through his campaign. According to the Reagan-Bush Committee's private polls, the President is making inroads. Males under the age of 45 favor him over Mondale by about a 20-point margin. About a third of the Hart voters have drifted over to him. Since Mondale won the Democratic nomination, voters under the age of 24 have overwhelmingly flocked into Reagan's camp. They have known only two Presidents, and Reagan does not suffer in the comparison. While the Democratic convention bolstered Mondale with his traditional constituency, younger voters, especially males, were almost completely unmoved. The Reagan-Bush Committee is trying to hold these voters through special appeal: Reagan is the first candidate ever to purchase advertising time on MTV, the music video channel. Reagan is a man for all media. His attractiveness to the young is mostly a function of his personality and the recovery. But whenever Reagan, or any other conservative, emphasizes social issues, younger voters immediately desert. The split within conservatism between technological progress and social reaction keeps the new generation beyond the conservatives' grasp and thus makes a conclusive political realignment elusive.

THE REAGAN-MONDALE contest, however sharply defined, masks a coming generational civil war, an irrepressible conflict. The conservatives' standing will mainly depend upon how convincingly they make their case among their contemporaries. They have a purchase on the new generation through their rendition of "the future" and their anti-establishmentarianism. But they are culturally retrograde—not because they extol traditional values, but because they receive new perspectives secondhand. Gingrich's Zen, for example, is trickle-down counterculture. The young conservatives are cut off from the leading edge of the New Class, the mass of knowledge-based professionals, at least partly because of their hostility to feminism and their remoteness from blacks. And to be alien or antagonistic to these sensibilities severs the conservatives from the most culturally strategic white males. Also, what happens if the Reagan recovery goes seriously sour?

The new generation has a self-image as a chosen generation, destined to make a great transformation. It may be too radical a step for many to permit those whose credentials were gained in the reaction to the popular generational movements of the past to lead them into the future. But by playing on disillusionment and unfulfilled hope, the young conservatives plan to realize their project of ruling twenty-first-century America. "There's a world view fight going on, a *weltanschauung* fight, at all levels," says Gingrich. "We agree with the younger liberals that the future is coming. But we fundamentally disagree about the nature of reality. The baby boomers are likely to split. It's unknowable who wins." What would Indiana Jones do? □

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So far right, they may walk right out of the G.O.P.

POP-CON POLITICS

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

THE ULTIMATE conservative put-down is to compare a liberal to Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister who ceded Central Europe to Adolf Hitler and who was finally replaced by Winston Churchill. So when Howard Phillips, the chairman of the Conservative Caucus and a leader of the New Right, describes the role today of the conservative movement, whom does he cast in the Chamberlain role? "Churchill had his Chamberlain," Phillips says. "We have our Reagan."

"The conservative movement is in much the same position today as Winston Churchill was in Great Britain during the 1930s," Phillips explained to a gathering of conservatives in Washington last March. "Neville Chamberlain was a popular leader of the Conservative Party, but Neville Chamberlain was wrong when it came to appeasing Adolf Hitler. When Britain's hour of maximum crisis came, the people of Britain had a place to which they could turn. If the conservative movement sacrifices its principles for the sake of personal loyalties, to whom will the American people turn when our hour of crisis comes in 1985 or 1986?"

Phillips is no stranger to invective, but other New Right leaders share his view of the Reagan Administration. They charge Reagan with one deviation after another from conservative principles. "We constantly hear nonsense about how conservatives are running everything," Terry Dolan, the director of the National Conservative Political Action Committee said. "If that were true, we wouldn't have the President in China, we wouldn't have the biggest budget deficits in history, we wouldn't have a preoccupation with arms control agreements, we wouldn't be talking about gender gaps, and the most massive increase in social spending in history." They attribute these deviations to Reagan's co-optation by the "Eastern establishment" or the "Wall Street wing" of the Republican Party, represented by Vice President George Bush.

Like most Washington politicos, they expect that Reagan will be reelected, but they are already preparing for the "hour of crisis" in his second term. Dolan explained, "1986 is going to be a disaster for a large number of conservatives because of the Reagan Administration. It will continue to move to the left and fuzz the issues, and therefore will take a massive beating in the 1986 elections."

Dolan is resigning his post in November partly because, he says, he doesn't want to face defeat in 1986 ("I want to be as far away from that as possible so nobody blames NCPAC"). But Phillips; Richard Viguerie, the direct-mail wizard and publisher of *Conservative Digest*; and Paul Weyrich, the president of Coalitions for America, are designing a vessel that, they hope, will weather the storm: a new third party called the Populist Conservative Party. According to Phillips, the party will be America's Churchill. "We have no Churchill per se," Phillips wrote in his *Conservative Caucus* newsletter March 26, "but the populist conservative movement, as a whole, through the instrument of a properly launched new party, can play his part for the benefit of America's liberty and independence in the 1980s and beyond."

None of the New Right leaders are opposing Reagan's reelection—Dolan, with Viguerie's help, is even running a $14 million independent campaign for the President. But Phillips, Viguerie, and Weyrich are spending much of 1984 planning the new movement and party. "I've pulled back," Viguerie says, "and I'm thinking of how we can design things so conservatives can come to power in 1988." The roots of the New Right's disenchantment with Reagan and the Republican Party go back before 1980 to the circumstances of its emergence as a movement. As Barry Goldwater's landslide defeat in 1964 made clear, the old right of Goldwater, William F. Buckley Jr., and Ohio Representative John Ashbrook faced a political dilemma of depressing proportions. If conservative politicians adhered strictly and openly to their fundamental objectives—the roll-back rather than containment of Soviet communism (through war, if necessary) and the evisceration of the welfare state—then they might win in Arizona but they could not hope to command a national governing majority.

Though some members of the old right resigned themselves to being a pressure group on the dominant liberal coalition, Viguerie, Phillips, and Weyrich sought to develop a political strategy that could guarantee a conservative majority. They came of age politically during the 1960s and early 1970s, their efforts were shaped by two seminal experiences: George Wallace's campaigns for the Presidency and the Nixon-Ford Administrations.

Although the future New Right leaders backed Nixon rather than Wallace in the 1968 election, they came to understand that the Wallace vote would be essential to any conservative majority. Kevin Phillips, a young aide in the Nixon Administration, who would also be identified

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John B. Judis, a senior editor of *In These Times*, is writing a biography of William F. Buckley Jr.

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with the New Right (but who is no relation to Howard Phillips), encapsulated this view in his book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*. Both Viguerie and Weyrich were impressed with Wallace's showing. From 1973 to 1976 Viguerie raised money through the mail for Wallace. "My working with Wallace was the beginning of my thinking in terms of coalition politics," Viguerie says.

From Wallace's success in the South and the urban North, they concluded that conservatives could win over blue-collar Democrats with the kinds of social and anti-elitist appeals that Wallace made. If, through their conservative economic policies, they could also hold the allegiance of Main Street Republicans, then they could hope for a new majority coalition. Such a strategy would not entail abandoning free enterprise economics, but it would require putting distance between conservatives and "country club" or "Wall Street" Republicans.

The New Right leaders were initially Republicans, but they found their loyalty tested and finally shattered during the Nixon and Ford years. In 1972 Viguerie ran a direct-mail campaign for John Ashbrook's Republican Presidential primary challenge to Nixon. When Ford appointed Nelson Rockefeller, the epitome of the Eastern establishment, to the Vice Presidency, Phillips, Weyrich, and Viguerie decided to put movement above party. From that point, they considered the task of building a majority conservative movement to be distinct from, and possibly in opposition to, building the Republican Party.

The New Right leaders had, and continued to have, differing views on important political questions. Phillips and Dolan are far more wedded to the old right's laissez-faire economics than Weyrich or Viguerie. Dolan is the most libertarian on social issues—for instance, he opposed the Family Protection Act. But they share, from the experience of the early 1970s, a commitment to building the old Nixon-Wallace majority.

In its first decade, the New Right leaders achieved dramatic successes. They helped make the Panama Canal treaty and abortion explosive national issues. They drew the right-to-life movement (which had been nonpartisan) and the white Southern Christian evangelicals (who had been apolitical) into a political alliance. And the New Right leaders helped to defeat numerous liberal Democrats in 1978 and 1980. But befitting the differences between them and traditional right-wing Republicans, they have played a tortuous role in the Republican Presidential politics.

IN 1976 Viguerie spent $35,000 to finance a John Connally-for-President campaign in the New Hampshire Democratic primary. He later claimed to be aiding Reagan by confusing the Democrats, but he confused more Republicans than Democrats. In the 1980 Republican primaries, the New Right leaders did not back Reagan, but Representative Phil Crane and then Connally. After Reagan was nominated, they offered only conditional support. ("Our endorsement of Ronald Reagan does not extend to George Bush," Viguerie warned in *Conservative Digest*.)

Some conservatives believe that Viguerie's behavior during 1976 and 1980 was not a function of conservative principle, but of mailing-list politics. In 1976 Viguerie was denied the Reagan fund-raising account. One conservative speculated, "I am almost positive that had he gotten it, there would have been nothing but pictures of Ronnie all over the front page of *Conservative Digest*."

But there is a credible political explanation for the behavior of the New Right leaders. They do not believe that the Republican Party can unite Wallace Democrats with conservative Republicans unless it amputates its Wall Street wing. Weyrich explained, "If these blue-collar Democrats look at the Republican Party, and they see the country clubs, the big banks, and business as usual, they will not go over and vote for the Republican ticket."

The New Right leaders have not believed that Reagan would be willing or able to part company with the party's Wall Street wing. In 1980 Viguerie explained, "I didn't see Reagan as a strong conservative but as an establishment figure, somebody who would go along with the pressure. After he left the governor's office in January 1975, there were no footprints. I see the same thing now. When he's gone, what will be the conservative legacy? George Bush?"

From Reagan's first year in office, the New Right leaders established a separate identity from the Administration. After the Republican defeats in the 1982 elections (See "Hard Times For The Hard Right," by Morton Kondracke, TNR, December 20, 1982), they went a step further. They began developing "populist conservatism"—or, tellingly, "Pop Con." In the last two years, as public concern shifted from social to economic issues, they have tried to make it their principal political identification. But "populist" has a considerable history in American politics, a history which the New Right leaders seem determined to ignore.

THE ORIGINAL Populist movement of the 1880s and 1890s organized white and black small farmers and some workingmen against the banks, railroads, and middlemen that they believed were driving them to ruin. The Populists started cooperatives and agitated for the nationalization of railroads, the regulation of banking, and the direct election of Senators.

In the South, Democrats defeated the Populist movement by combining racism and disenfranchisement of black Populists with the rhetorical veneer of populism. Democrats like Pitchfork Ben Tillman of South Carolina and, later, Tom Watson of Georgia were as much anti-Populists as Populists. George Wallace was far more a descendant of Tillman and Watson than of the Populists. His opposition to big business was largely rhetorical, his appeal partially racial. And it is from Wallace rather than from real Populists that the New Right's populism descends.

On economic issues, the New Right's populism is an inversion of the Populist Party program. While the Populists believed, in the words of their 1892 party platform that "the powers of government . . . should be expanded . . . to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land"; the populist conservatives favor reducing the power of government to regulate busi-

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ness. "The populists of old recognized that the establishment was doing them in, but they made a mistake and they turned to government as the solution. What they did was substitute one devil for another devil," Viguerie explains.

Where the Populists favored a silver standard and easy money and credit, Populist Conservatives like Phillips favor a deflationary gold standard. Where the Populists favored replacing regressive taxes with a "graduated income tax," the New Right leaders' first venture on behalf of their new identity has been a Populist Conservative Tax Coalition to promote a 10 percent flat income tax. The New Right populists attack big business only for its sponsorship of television shows they deem immoral or for its support of loans to Communist and Third World countries. Of the old Populist reforms, they endorse only the initiative and referendum.

Populism at its height was an interracial movement, but the New Right leaders have inherited the all-white constituencies of Wallace's Presidential campaigns as well as Wallace's ambiguous relation to the race issue. Although New Right leaders like Weyrich make a point of declaring their eagerness to recruit blacks, some politicians identified with the New Right such as Senator Jesse Helms tread a thin line on the subject of race.

VIGUERIE, Phillips, and Weyrich plan to launch the party in early 1985 with meetings in each Congressional district. But they remain uncertain about the role and objective of the party. Weyrich does not believe that the party will supplant either the Republicans or the Democrats, but that in coalition with Democratic and Republican conservatives it can create a governing majority in Congress. Weyrich's principal models are the old Progressive Party, led by Wisconsin State Senator Robert LaFollette (Weyrich is from Racine, Wisconsin), and the German Free Democratic Party, which holds the swing votes in the Christian Democratic government of Helmut Kohl. According to Weyrich, the new party would not oppose conservative Republicans or Democrats, but would run candidates in districts where there was no conservative candidate. Although Weyrich foresees electing only a few initial House members, he believes that in close votes they could wield considerable influence. Weyrich dismisses the idea of running a third party Presidential candidate in 1988; Phillips, however, is more ambitious. He believes that the new party might be "able to mount a credible and legitimate Presidential candidate in 1988, if the Republicans are perceived to have failed."

The proposal for a Populist-Conservative Party has renewed decade-old controversies within the conservative movement. John McLaughlin, an editor at the *National Review*, termed the timing of the proposals "obscene." Noreen Barr of the Eagle Forum, an old right organization, was equally emphatic. "We have nothing whatsoever to do with third party efforts," she said. "We support the President wholeheartedly."

Even among those identified with the New Right, there is considerable disagreement with the perspective of Viguerie, Weyrich, and Phillips. The conservative evangelicals remain firmly committed to Reagan. One leader of the religious right made the point more starkly. Placing his two index fingers side by side, he moved them forward and then apart, like two travelers diverging along separate paths. "This is what will happen to the New Right and the Christian evangelical right if they go ahead with a third party," he said.

The major politicians identified with the New Right have also steered clear of the new party proposal and of their denunciation of Reagan. Lewis Lehrman, a candidate for Governor of New York in 1982, now heads a pro-Reagan grass-roots lobby, Citizens for America, headquartered in the Heritage Foundation. (See "Let Lehrman Be Reagan," by Sidney Blumenthal, TNR, December 5, 1983.) Lehrman said, "My goal is to help President Reagan forge a permanent and mighty majority coalition, so that his goal, a total victory for the conservative reform agenda, can occur in a single generation."

At stake in this controversy are two starkly opposing views of the Republican Party: the party as the leader of a conservative realignment and the party as hopelessly divided between Wall Street and Main Street and therefore capable of winning over only a minority of voters.

Oddly, there is some truth in both of these views. Reagan's nomination and election in 1980 did complete the conquest of the Republican Party by conservatives that was begun in the early 1960s with the Draft Goldwater movement. The Republican Party, whether under Reagan or Bush, appears to be committed to the hard-line anti-Communist and free market economics supported by both the old and the New Right. Whether it is able to inflict these views on the country depends upon the Republicans' control of the White House and Congress.

In this respect, McLaughlin, Lehrman, and others are correct when they say that the New Right's view of Reagan is sectarian or purist. But the New Right leaders also have a point. Reagan may win reelection in 1984, but Republicans will not win control of Congress, and they are not likely to do so during the 1980s. The reason for this is that the Republican Party has not resolved the dilemma posed by Goldwater's landslide defeat in 1964. Its conservatism—identified with Wall Street as well as Main Street—will have difficulty capturing the hearts of Americans in the lower tax brackets. It can temporarily win their allegiance—through racial polarization, Democratic foreign and economic policy failures, and traditional cultural appeals—but it cannot hold them in a majority coalition.

And if Reagan and the Republicans cannot, neither can the New Right. Populist conservatism is, in the end, not an alternative to the conservatism of the Republicans, but a new way to market it. Kevin Phillips, who has increasingly become an observer of, rather than participant in, the New Right, put it simply in a recent article, "Conservative populism is an intriguing ideological mix. But on economic issues, it is a lot more conservative than it is populist, and its appeal is limited accordingly." □

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Lebanon's labyrinth and Jerusalem's first Arab embassy.

ONWARD CHRISTIAN DIPLOMATS

BY CRAIG S. KARPEL

Jerusalem

NO SOONER did Pierre Yazbeck drive away from the King David Hotel, sedans carrying his Mossad bodyguard fore and aft, than three shots snapped like firecrackers, punching 9-millimeter black holes in the door of his car. The Mossad men squealed off after the vehicle from which the bullets had come, but lost it. All roads out of the city were blocked and hundreds of Palestinians were questioned, but the assailants were not captured. Yazbeck, head of the Lebanese Christian Agency which recently has been established here, was not hit.

The reason he was not hit is that the attack didn't take place. Like many stories in *al-Ba'ath*, the newspaper of Syria's ruling party, the story describing the attempt on Yazbeck's life owed more to editorial creativity than is customary in the Western press.

Although the *al-Ba'ath* account was fictional, it gives an indication of what certain elements would like to see happen to Pierre Yazbeck. It becomes clearer why a Lebanese office in Jerusalem would be a major irritant to Syria when one considers that there is no Syrian office in Beirut. Damascus, which claims Lebanon as part of greater Syria, finds it difficult to view with equanimity a move by a key Lebanese player to accord diplomatic recognition to its archenemy.

And then there is the problem that the maxim "*divide et impera*" does not apply to Lebanon. Lebanon is not merely divided—it is minced. The country is too fragmented to be governed imperially. The would-be ruler must first reassemble it. Damascus has made some progress toward this end by cowing Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, installing the reliably pro-Syrian Rashid Karameh as Prime Minister, and showing its regard for its Druse ally, Walid Jumblatt, by giving him complete charge of tourism. With Syria on the verge of subjugating an artificially unified Lebanon, the Christians—who control eight hundred square miles of territory encompassing East Beirut, the coast stretching north to the outskirts of Tripoli, and the inland region known as "The Mountain"—have made the most demonstratively autonomous gesture conceivable in the Arab world: flying their flag across the street from the Knesset.

The Lebanese Christian Agency has moved into a residential tower opposite the pine grove which surrounds Israel's parliament. So that the staff will not be too homesick, the floors have been redone in gleaming russet marble and the walls in textured plaster, with vinyl sofas and chrome-and-smoked-glass occasional tables brought from East Beirut. But the most distinctively Lebanese feature of the office is the tangle of motivations, calculations, organizations, formulations, and expectations behind it.

There is the belated recognition by the people who spattered Israel with the blood of Sabra and Shatila that if they want continued Israeli support, they must do what can be done to repair their nasty reputation among Israelis. About all Yazbeck can do at this point is to admit disarmingly to the slaughter of innocents, characterize it as inexcusable, and ask that the rage of his people, who have been on the receiving end of massacres as well, be understood and forgiven. The educational, artistic, and athletic programs Yazbeck is coordinating with Israel will go only a very small way toward putting the toothpaste of 1982 back in the tube.

The programs, however, will serve another purpose: that of worrying the Syrians. The leaders in Damascus fear a permanent fracturing of Lebanon along religious fault lines. Syria is itself a sectarian hodgepodge, inherently no different from Lebanon. Thirteen percent of its population is Christian. Its Muslims too are split between Sunni and Shiites, and it too has a Druse minority. The major difference is that the country is governed by a heterodox Shiite sub-sect, the Nusairis—known in the West as the Alawites. But the 1982 uprising by the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama, in which thousands of Sunnis were killed and the city leveled, provided dramatic evidence that Nusairi rule is not unchallenged. As Muhammad Abd al-Jabiri, a professor at Muhammad V University in Beirut, noted recently, "All Arab countries have something of Lebanon in them; that is, they are suffering from a rupture of the national fabric to different degrees. . . . Other Arab communities would face the same fate as Lebanon when these contradictions surface." The spectacle of Lebanon devolving into confessional mini-states could raise sectarian consciousness next door to the point where the Nusairis, less than 12 percent of the populace, might face not only the disintegration of the 38-year-old Syrian polity but their own extermination as well. For Yazbeck's office to behave like the embassy of a sovereign nation, complete with commercial, cultural, and military attachés, raises in Damascus the specter of a balkanization of Lebanon that

Craig S. Karpel is a journalist with a special interest in Middle East affairs.

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could be followed by a Lebanization of Syria. The opening of the office thus puts pressure on Damascus to moderate its drive for hegemony over all of Lebanon, lest the Christian Petit Liban secede.

Then there is the slippery question of exactly whose office has just opened. Is the Lebanese Christian Agency simply the mouthpiece of the pro-Israel faction of the Phalangists, as Damascus claims? Is it the Jerusalem representation of the Maronites' Lebanese Forces, as the Israeli press says? Or does it speak for all of Lebanon's Christian communities, as Yazbeck announced at his inaugural reception, hosted by Mayor Teddy Kollek at Jerusalem's city hall?

THE ANSWER is none of the above—and all of the above. During Lebanon's 1975-76 civil war, there was a wall-to-wall coalition of Maronites—the Lebanese Front. It linked Pierre Gemayel's Phalanges Libanaises Party; Camille Shamoun's National Liberal Party; the followers of ex-president Suleiman Franjieh; a militia known as the Guardians of the Cedars; and the Tanzim, a militia said to be controlled by the Maronite monastic orders. All five factions were under the command of Pierre's son, Bashir Gemayel, and known as the United Forces. Around the time of Israel's 1978 Litani operation against the P.L.O. in southern Lebanon, Franjieh, who had been shifting to a pro-Syrian line, left the Front. Bashir's consortium of militias changed its name to the Lebanese Forces. Today the Lebanese Forces' fifteen thousand troops control East Beirut and the Christian enclave of The Mountain, the historic heartland of Petit Liban.

Since Bashir's assassination there has been an increasing divergence among the Phalangists. Supporters of Amin Gemayel, led by his father Pierre and the members of the party's politburo, hold that the only way to preserve what is left of Maronite power is to accept a diminished role in a centralized and (regrettably, but inexorably) Syrian-dominated Lebanon. The group around Fady Frem, the young engineer who succeeded Bashir as commander of the Lebanese Forces, believes that centralization would mean Muslim ascendancy, with Christians reduced to second-class citizenship. Frem contends that Syrian influence in the country can be countered—perhaps even rolled back—through strong Maronite relations with Israel.

The Jerusalem office is Frem's initiative, with a bit of Israeli prompting. The Israelis have long been after Frem to raise the profile of his contacts with Israel, arguing that it is unrealistic to expect the Israeli public indefinitely to favor aid to Lebanon's Christians without an overture by the Christians toward Israel. Frem, emerging as a leader of substance as Amin collapsed, was looking for an opening to assert the Lebanese Forces' independence from the politburo, not to mention the autonomy of the Christian enclave that his troops control. As it became clear during February's fighting that it was only a matter of weeks before Amin would cave in to Syrian pressure to abrogate the May 17, 1983, treaty normalizing relations with Israel, Frem sent Yazbeck, his spokesman to the foreign press, to Jerusalem to start looking for office space. If relations between Lebanon and Israel were not going to be normalized, the time had come to begin normalizing relations between Petit Liban and Israel.

The Israelis pressed Frem and Yazbeck to broaden the base of the planned office to include other denominations besides the Maronites, who make up half of Lebanon's Christians. "Phalangist" was a dirty word in Israel, and importing Beirut's sleekest coffee tables wouldn't be able to clean it up. Frem consented, seeing the establishment of the office as a potential rallying point for consolidating and formalizing his leadership of the country's numerous Christian communities, which include the Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, and Protestants. But much as he would like to transfer the focus of the other communities' political allegiance from the Maronite gerontocracy to the youthful command council of the Lebanese Forces—and much as many non-Maronite Christians yearn for a leader more inspiring than Amin Gemayel—he has had to move cautiously. Amin may be unable to thwart the Syrians, but he still can make life complicated for Christians who attempt to thwart him. In mid-March, delegates of fifteen Christian denominational leagues and associations convened to form a National Christian Council, which issued a communiqué condemning the "Syrian directions taken by the Senate," and denouncing abrogation of the May 17 agreement, "the only means of liberating the South." The new grouping expressed its support for the Lebanese Forces' "political proposals," but stopped short of explicitly endorsing the establishment of a Jerusalem office.

ALL OF THESE Levantine tergiversations emerged in a conversation I had with Pierre Yazbeck the first day the Jerusalem office was open for business. Thirty-two years old, luxuriantly mustached, he was dressed like a true son of The Mountain—in a beige silk double-breasted suit. "The flag on your left is the Lebanese," I noted.

"Yes," said Yazbeck.

"And the one on your right?"

"That's being changed. It's the flag of the Lebanese Forces. But it's going to be replaced by the Lebanese Christian Agency's flag. We're having it made now." Yazbeck explained that the Lebanese Christian Agency will sometimes speak only for the Lebanese Forces and sometimes for the entire National Christian Council and the Christian organizations in southern Lebanon as well.

Yazbeck's problem isn't unique. Everyone in Lebanon has to decide which of the many factional flags he or she is going to salute. The Christian leadership that Yazbeck represents proposes, in effect, that Lebanon be reconstituted as a circle of religious pennants linked to a national banner at its center. "Forced centralization of Lebanon, as is now being attempted under Syrian direction, only destabilizes it further," Yazbeck said. "1982 blasted away the myth of the 1943 National Pact—that it was possible to have a unitary state with interconfessional differences brokered within a central

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government formed according to sectarian quotas."

"Lebanon is a de facto federation of religious communities," he went on to explain. "Forced centralization generates an explosive centrifugal reaction. It may result in partition of the country—obliteration of Lebanon's unique identity, dismemberment of its economy, absorption of the Bekaa into Syria, and continuing internecine strife. The only way partition can be prevented is through what we call a 'deep decentralization.' Today, self-governing Druse and Christian cantons already exist on the ground, but have no juridical standing. We propose an officialization of this status quo, with transformation of the structures of state into a system that would link confessional cantons in a national federation."

I asked him about the Sunnis, who control no sector because their population is divided among Sidon, West Beirut, Tripoli, and the North. "This would have to be negotiated with the Sunnis," he replied. "They cannot speak now because they are terrorized by Syria. But our conception is that each area would be governed by the denomination that is in the majority there. Tripoli and the North, for example, could constitute a Sunni canton."

How could the Shiites, with concentrations in Beirut's southern slums, the Bekaa, and South Lebanon, fit into the cantonal picture?

"The Shiites in Beirut are an unnatural concentration. They are refugees from the South, and should return."

Might not this mean an increase of radical Shiite terrorism across Israel's northern border?

"THE MOST important Shiite leader is Nabih Berri, head of Amal and minister of justice. He is a moderate, dialogue-oriented, a man with a modern mind and not a medieval ayatollah. There is now a sort of 'Khomeini Trail' linking the Shiites in the Bekaa, a faction of which is under Syrian tutelage, with Beirut. The flow of extremists from the Syrian-controlled area is radicalizing the Shiites of the capital. Berri is most interested in stopping the flow of Khomeinists from the Bekaa to Beirut, which threatens his leadership. But he cannot express this interest as long as the trail is open. In fact, he must make radical sounds, urging his people to fight the Israelis in the South."

How can the infiltration be stopped?

"Jumblatt allows Shiite radicals to move with their arms and ammunition through the Druse sector in the southern part of The Mountain. Israel should encourage dialogue between Druse and Christians toward the goal of closing the breaches in The Mountain. Israel has important influence with Jumblatt because of the Druse community in Israel and the proximity of Israel's military line to the Druse-controlled Shuf. Israel was able to use this influence in a constructive manner earlier this year in arranging for the evacuation of Christians besieged by Druse in Dir al-Kamar and in demilitarizing Iklim al-Kharoub, enabling its Christian population to return.

"Ultimately, it is in the Druse interest to help us contain Khomeinism and work for cantonization with federation. In a unitary Lebanon dominated by Muslims and directed by Syria, they are in worse position than we are. We at least are like the Jews, 'people of the Book,' and thus have a 'protected,' if degraded, status within Dar al-Islam. The Druse are heretics—as the Muslims say, 'destined to the knife.' "

I asked him how he viewed Israel's presence in the South.

"We want the Israelis to withdraw as quickly as possible—but it's a question of *how* they withdraw. As long as the flow of extremists from the Bekaa to Beirut continues, they should stay. Otherwise the entire demography of the South will become terroristic. The problem is that Assad reads the Israeli press and has no incentive to alleviate his pressure on us, on the Druse, on the Shiites, or on Amin Gemayel, because he expects a premature Israeli withdrawal for domestic political reasons."

YAZBECK'S DIAGNOSIS was compelling. But would his prescription work? Israeli officials responded positively to the opening of the office. But they are privately skeptical about the prospects for cantonization and scathing about Yazbeck's call for Israel to be the matchmaker between Frem and Jumblatt. "This is the Christians' way of trying to cajole us into getting involved with their problems," says a high-ranking official. "What Frem's people really want isn't our good offices with the Druse—it's for us to send three divisions into Beirut. Well, we're not going to do it."

American diplomatic circles in Israel wonder whether Frem will be able to get the non-Maronite members of the National Christian Council to give a public endorsement of the Jerusalem office. "Amin is waging a silent war against the National Christian Council and the Lebanese Forces," a high U.S. Embassy source says. "For instance, he's sent one of his gofers to the Papal Nuncio in Beirut to complain that various Maronite priests are making it hard for him to 'reconcile' the Muslim and Christian communities by their support of Frem. He's asking that the Vatican instruct them to get out of politics."

Meanwhile Yazbeck, unfazed, has installed the Lebanese Christian Agency's new flag, a cedar superimposed on a red crucifix. He recently organized a conference in the Christian enclave between a group of Lebanese academic foreign policy analysts and their Israeli counterparts. More than a few of the latter still don't think much of Jerusalem's first Arab embassy. "The Druse relate to us in a far more sophisticated way," shrugs one. "They send a secret envoy on a regular basis. For the Christians to open an office is mainly an act of defiance."

Pierre Yazbeck did not need to be informed of this comment to broach the subject of defiance. "Israel wanted normalization with Lebanon," he said. "We shall give her normalization. Even including a travel program to enable Israelis to visit our sector and vice versa. I'm planning to establish ferry service between Haifa and Jounieh. If we show the Druse and the Shiites that it's possible to defy Syria, perhaps they will follow suit." □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Jaundice Posing as Justice

A vicious film arrives from Holland, made by a woman about the condition of women in Western society.

A Question of Silence is Marleen Gorris's first film, and before the credits are finished, she shows exceptional competence both as writer and director. Between the credits we get blocks of action that start the four strands of the story economically, engagingly. All signs are prime, and, sheerly in filmmaking terms, they don't mislead: cinematically, there is never a tremor of doubt.

A Question of Silence
(Quartet Films)

But the film is an atrocity, and a sketch of the story is needed to show why. Four Amsterdam women are central. Cox Habbema is a young psychiatrist whose husband is a lawyer. (We first see Habbema at home, teasing her husband out of study into sex.) Edda Barends is a lower-middle-class housewife with three children. Nelly Frijda is a stout, amiable waitress in a hash house. Henriette Tol is a chic, bright secretary to a business biggie. The psychiatrist gets a telephone call from an official appointing her to examine the other three women after they are visited by the police and arrested. It's important to note that each of the three arrested women has been living her usual life, expects the police, and goes with them quietly.

In flashback we learn that the three women collaborated in a murder. One day Barends wheeled her smallest child's pram into a boutique, parked it behind the counter with the permission of the owner, a man, then went to look at dresses. When she thought the owner wasn't looking, she stuffed a dress into her bag; but he saw, approached her smilingly, reached into her bag, and took out the dress. Stolidly, Barends then took other dresses, with the man watching, and put them in her bag. Frijda and Tol also happened to be in the shop—the women didn't know one another—and, watching Barends, they too began defiantly to put dresses in their bags. Four other women, of differing ages and types, were also in the shop: they watched motionless. The whole scene was silent. The three pilfering women then closed in grimly on the owner, who began to panic. Before he could do anything, one of the three knocked him to the ground. They then began to kill him with kicks, beating with hat stands, gouging with bits of a mirror and a plastic hanger. His genitals particularly (we learn later) were smashed.

The three killers had understood one another at once and silently agreed on the killing. The other four silently approved.

All this comes out through Habbema's interviews of the three in prison. (This Dutch prison looks better than most new American middle-income housing.) We also learn about their backgrounds. Barends won't speak. It's her reaction to the fact that, in her life, her husband never really spoke to her: harried by work, he only wanted his house kept, his clothes and children tended. Despite her silence in prison, her past is made manifest. Tol, as we see, is highly intelligent and was very helpful in her boss's business but was slighted, kept at her secretarial level because of her sex. Frijda is shown as the daily butt of coarse jokes in her job.

Habbema is to prepare a pre-trial report on the three prisoners, principally to find out whether they are or were insane (the word used). But the women seem better equipped to handle *her* than vice versa. She is not professionally incompetent, but she is shown as less perceptive than they of why their lives prepared them to commit the act. Their complete lack of anything like remorse or guilt, their readiness to accept punishment because they have no regret, at last affect Habbema as a woman. One night, during the weeks of inquiry, Habbema's husband nags her into having sex though she's not inclined. Later that night, forgetting her opening scene in which roles were reversed, she gets up to play her tapes of the women.

At the trial, the four witnesses of the murder—about whom the police know nothing—appear in court, sit in back, and patently give the accused their silent support. Habbema testifies that she thinks the three women sane; this is her professional opinion, but it also has implications that include quasi-approval. At lunch, her husband pleads with her to reconsider; her opinion will make a scandal and will hurt his practice. She sticks to her guns in court. The prosecutor wonders whether her view would have been the same if the victim had been a woman. This makes Barends, the previously silent prisoner, burst into laughter. The two other prisoners join the laughter; then the four secret witnesses in back join; then Habbema.

As Habbema comes out of the courthouse, she momentarily blocks a man's way; he calls her a cunt. Her husband, below in his car, toots his horn impatiently. The four witnesses come out on the steps above Habbema. Her husband toots. But she turns and faces the four

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Bostonians. Vanessa Redgrave is so fine as Olive, the look of the film is so splendid, that the dimness of Verena and of the Henry James texture are almost outbalanced. (Reviewed 8/6/84)

Last Night at the Alamo. The Alamo is a bar in Houston today, facing demolition. Through it pass some regulars facing other kinds of demolition. A small-scale, well-made film. (8/27/84)

The Muppets Take Manhattan. They deserve it—and much more. This time they hit Broadway with their college show. Not their best film, but who's complaining? (8/13&20/84)

Top Secret! A spy-spoof from the makers of *Airplane!* Fewer laughs than the earlier picture, but it's nice to go to a party with the same perpetrators. (8/13&20/84)

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women. Her choice is made: she has enlisted.

The husband's cowardice, quite unprepared, and the sexist epithet on the steps show some unease on Gorris's part—as if she felt she needed more evidence. But those last touches only confirm, not her case, but the moral abyss of the film, as if they were ex post facto justifications of the crime.

This is a vile story. Three widely different women share a buried bond of oppression so galling that, in concert and without speaking a word, they join in the bestial murder of a man whose only action, clearly irrelevant to their killing, is to protect his property. Fantasies about many kinds of murder are probably more common than we would care to admit; but the fact that they usually remain fantasy is what helps to make civilization possible. These women enact their fantasies. They murder this man because, apparently, they have always wanted to murder at least some men and because he is the man on hand when the fantasy breaks loose simultaneously in all three. Let's not argue with the fact that it happens so neatly, so balletically, or that the four other, completely different women tacitly approve. What is vile is that we are meant to sympathize. By her laughter in court and by her final action, the psychiatrist—a *physician*—gives them her approval; and the film wants us to do the same.

I find this tacit request for sympathy and approval entirely loathsome. The mistreatment of women by men through the centuries, still preponderant, doesn't need quick synopsis here in order to balance a sentence; but the action of the women in this film seems to me far outside the approval of any civilized, socially concerned woman or man. Black people, Chicanos, American Indians have all endured, still endure, filthy oppression and injustice; shall we now have films in which three of each of those groups murder a white person simply because that person is white? And shall we be asked for our approval because of the history of those groups' sufferings?

Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman* (TNR, April 4, 1983) showed us a housewife-prostitute shoving a pair of scissors into a customer's throat, but we had a long journey through social pressure and mental disintegration before the act and a view of collapse after it. Gorris first shows us her murderers *after* their crime, living normally, with the bestiality merely an episode that each woman understands and accepts in herself, with each woman quite unremorsefully prepared for punishment. That this film expects our sympathy for these women seems to me a shocking perversion of the work to expose and amend sexist injustice.

Possibly some readers will ascribe my reaction to the fact that I'm male. I would disregard these comments because they would be based on acceptance of this film's premise: that any woman has the right to kill any man because of the history of male domination and selfishness. This premise is neither social candor nor human truth. It's a combination of moral terrorism and cheap exploitation of an urgent issue.

Perhaps the reader thinks I make too much of this matter? *A Question of Silence* has already won four prizes, including Grand Prix at the International Women's Festival.

LET US NOW PRAISE

James Agee: A Life
by Laurence Bergreen

(Dutton, 470 pp., $20)

This country has not produced very many Classical authors, those who seek out the normal, the eternal, the representative, and who suppress everything bizarre or accidental. To be sure, Large General Meanings have haunted American fiction from Hawthorne and Melville to Faulkner and Pynchon, but such intimations have usually been felt by Americans in the odd, the troubling, the unique. Few ordinary mortals are stigmatized with a scarlet letter, fewer still seek to avenge themselves on a white whale; the very intensity of scarlet and white crowd out the beiges, grays, and duns of everyday life.

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But if most American writers have been Romantics, James Agee chose in his masterpiece, *A Death in the Family*, to represent his subject in its most generic, Classical aspect. Although the novel is closely based on an event out of his own childhood—his father's death in a car crash when Agee was only 6 years old—the book is not written exclusively from the point of view of the confused and bereaved little boy. There is none of the subjectivity, special pleading, or remembered anguish that one usually finds in fictionalized autobiography; nor is it primarily concerned with the child's awakening to adult realities. Instead, the tale reports the responses of each member of the family—the little boy and his sister, the widow Mary, her parents, her brother Andrew, and her aunt. No one is portrayed as a grotesque, nor does the tone ever turn Gothic. Everything, from the title to the level of diction to the selection of the smallest characteristic, radiates a quiet, noble glow. There are few interesting American novels that possess such composure; for a similar ambition and achievement one must turn to John Huston, the film director Agee so feverishly admired and with whom he collaborated in the making of *The African Queen*.

JAMES AGEE BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Laurence Bergreen has written a detailed but never undiscriminating biography. All too often the familiarity of the biographer with his subject breeds contempt ("*I'd* never marry three times. Why, I haven't even married once!") or leads to a subtle downgrading of the person portrayed. Bergreen never succumbs to this occupational hazard, not even when he deals with Agee's alcoholism or writer's block, two conditions that can be tedious to read or write about. Still better, Bergreen neither over nor under interprets Agee's motives and actions. Agee was always haunted by a sense of guilt even after he lost his faith. (He was brought up Anglo-Catholic.) His childhood was marked by the death of his virile, loving father; his adolescence by a violent, unreciprocated homosexual passion; and his adulthood by three marriages, numerous affairs, and acute alcoholism. A more reductive biography would have insisted on ascribing the alcoholism and Don Juanism to repressed homosexuality and the homosexuality to Oedipal guilt over his father's death. Bergreen avoids any hint of that sort of vulgarity.

And he permits the reader to wallow as much in vulgar interpretation as he might wish. This reader, at least, was struck by the never expressed but ever immanent rage that Agee seemed to be feeling, especially in his epic bouts of self-destruction. The rage often pokes out in a weird word choice in the letters. Agee said feminists (whom he despised) were "hurt and dulled by the fractures and *foulnesses* of the love they experience" (emphasis mine). Of himself he said to his confessor and lifelong friend Father Flye, "I'm sometimes really forced to believe I have a *dirty* and unconquerable vein of melancholia in me" (emphasis mine). Again to Father Flye he complained of his suicidal impulses, saying, "I haven't enough good in me to realize the *filthiness* of this discontent" (emphasis mine).

This savage self-condemnation seems to me to be linked to a sort of intense, hushed voyeurism, an awed fascination with what adult men and women do behind closed doors. The pages in *A Death in the Family* that shine with radioactive beauty are those at the beginning that describe the intimacy between the wife and her husband, so soon to die. The masculinity of this adored man permeates the entire book, like strong scent burned into a sleeve. Again and again there is an almost liturgical return to a description of his dead body: " 'I saw him—stripped—at the undertaker's,' Andrew said. 'Mary, there wasn't a mark on his body. Just that little cut on the chin. One little bruise on his lower lip. Not another mark on his body. He had the most magnificent physique I've ever seen in a human being.' "

At times Agee played the voyeur in real life. He bullied his best friend, the photographer Walker Evans (with whom he collaborated on the book about Depression sharecroppers, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*), to make love to Agee's wife Alma—while Agee watched. As Bergreen puts it:

> When the time arrived, he sat at the foot of the bed, watching Alma and Evans make love. Instead of scientific detachment, he was overcome by spasms of pain, love, and jealousy. The conflicting emotions the sight aroused within his breast were so strong that he had no recourse but to cry. Never before had he felt the full panoply of his emotions simultaneously, everything from extreme love to extreme hate, from extreme tenderness to extreme

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cruelty. The spectacle of the bodies writhing on the bed was more than he could comfortably handle, and his emotional devastation was complete.

A Classical author, as Racine revealed in *Phèdre*, submits his feelings to severe restraint because they are the great ungovernable ones—pride, revenge, and imperious sexual passion.

THE benign aspect of Agee's voyeurism was his compassion and curiosity. When doing the research for *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Agee passed himself off as the son of poor farmers and lived in a vermin-infested shack with a sharecropper family for three weeks. In one sense this "research" was a shocking invasion of naïve people's privacy, even dignity; in a more lasting sense, however, the book that emerged out of those three weeks has become one of the most memorable documents about American poverty ever written. It was, incidentally, a document that went unread until it was reissued in 1960, five years after Agee's death; of the original edition, published in 1941, only six hundred copies were sold, despite reviews praising it by *Time*, THE NEW REPUBLIC, and by Lionel Trilling in *Kenyon Review*.

Agee was only 45 when he died in 1955 of a coronary occlusion. His death had been hastened by his inability to stop drinking, fatal given his weak heart. He left no will or property beyond $450 in a savings account. Despite the brevity of his life and his repeated blocks, he had done a great deal of work—endless and beautifully polished letters; a major body of film criticism published in *Time* and *The Nation*; numerous screenplays; two novels; a volume of short stories; a book of poems; and miscellaneous articles for *Fortune* and *Time*.

Agee's lack of confidence, his alcoholism, and his poverty made him especially susceptible to the two false gods often worshipped by talented writers—journalism and the movies. Agee worked for many years for Luce, as did such other luminaries as Dwight Macdonald, Robert Fitzgerald, Archibald MacLeish—and Whittaker Chambers (Agee's office mate, to whom he remained loyal during the Hiss-Chambers hearings).

Bergreen has captured the nuances of that exquisitely designed penal colony called Time Inc. I myself worked there eight years, from 1962 to 1970 as a staff writer for Time-Life Books, a division lower in prestige than the magazines but at that time the most important source of corporate revenue. The Book Division of the '60s had perfected and preserved the Luce approach devised when Agee had been an employee. Writers were paid considerably more than they could make anywhere else as journalists. Hours were flexible, offices were luxurious, fellow workers intelligent, progressive, Ivy League. Most staff members were far to the left of their editors; rueful jokes about "undermining the system from within" were on everyone's lips. A rigid gender-linked division of labor prevailed; writers were male, researchers were female. Office romances were frequent, naturally. So was frustration, especially among talented women. Stringers and researchers gathered endless reams of beautifully analyzed information that was bestowed on the writer, who never left his office. An assembly-line system (and psychology) prevailed. Aggressive, fabulously well-paid male editors vigorously rewrote everything. In the *Time* of those days (and in the Book Division) no pieces were signed. If the staff stayed late to meet a deadline, expensive meals were catered and carts dispensing free liquor rattled up and down the halls.

LUCE'S idea of collective journalism had a complex impact on its practitioners. The professional pride of working at top salaries for national publications was undermined by the anonymity and the brutal rewriting. The agreeably clubby social tone scarcely masked the humiliations of the rigid sexism, the authoritarian power structure, and the right-wing politics imposed on everyone's published words. The Time Inc. personal style, cultivated by many of its employees, was maddeningly superior, knowing, cynical, and hedonistic (but always within the bounds of a New England WASP brand of good taste). Even the brightest rebel had to acknowledge the savviness, fair-mindedness, and cultivation of his oppressors. In fact, rebellion was permitted, even admired, as long as copy that "sang," that had great gobs of "color," that effortlessly covered all the necessary "nuts and bolts" was turned in on time and to fit—and in conformity with Mr. Luce's politics.

A gilded cage, indeed, in which Agee was the Emperor's Nightingale. Agee exhibited all the passive hostility his

"...a remote and difficult country, and such a Spirit as now animates them may do strange things."

—Edmund Burke, writing on America in August, 1775.

Burke was remarkable among the English politicians of his day in being friendly towards the American Revolution. In his Introduction to the SELECTED LETTERS OF EDMUND BURKE, Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., compares Burke to Toqueville and Churchill in his ability to grasp the significance of events.

Mansfield has organized his selection to reveal the grand themes of Burke's political philosophy—his views on such issues as party politics; reform and revolution; British relations with America, India, and Ireland; and religious toleration.

Although Burke is regarded as the grandfather of modern conservatism, he does not, Mansfield points out, fit comfortably into American conservatism of the 1980s. Mansfield also notes that those conservatives of the 1950s who made Burke a purveyor of the theory of natural law overlooked the fact that Burke himself constantly warned of the evils that would inevitably follow upon the intrusion of any theory into political practice.

Selected Letters of Edmund Burke

Edited and with an Introduction by

HARVEY C. MANSFIELD, JR.,

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ambiguous feelings toward authority prompted. He talked communism in the corridors but wrote as a sensitive Republican might. He broke the dress code, seldom bathed, sometimes stank, drank in his office, staggered in at noon, seduced the researchers, blasphemed the Founder—but his movie reviews, the most penetrating and serious ever written till then, came out faultlessly week after week. On special occasions, when *Time* needed its most eloquent voice to praise or lament, Agee was there to turn in a bravura performance. (He wrote the cover story on the bombing of Hiroshima, for instance.)

Agee at his best—in *A Death in the Family* or *The Letters of James Agee to Father Flye*—combined the fluency he cultivated as a journalist (and as a conversationalist) with a quirky integrity closer to the ideal he had learned at Harvard from I. A. Richards—the ideal of absolute fidelity to the rendered experience. It was this Agee who could write in *A Death in the Family*: "that darkness in which eternity lies bent and pale, a dead snake in a jar, and infinity is the sparkling of a wren blown out to sea."

EDMUND WHITE

Edmund White's most recent book is *A Boy's Own Story* (New American Library). He is currently living in Paris.

THINKING THE THINKABLE

The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy by Robert Jervis

(Cornell University Press, 240 pp., $19.95)

It is now thirty years since John Foster Dulles gave the impression that the United States would instigate global nuclear war at the first sign of a Communist trespass into what was loosely described as the "free world." Whatever the validity of this impression or its short-term impact on U.S. foreign policy, the consequences for American intellectual life of the "massive retaliation" speech were lasting. The apparent recklessness of his policy gave many academics a new sense of vocation as they began seriously to explore the nuclear age and then to educate the nation's leaders in its realities. Now the Reagan Administration, though with somewhat less aplomb, is performing the same function for the strategic studies community. It is spurring it into action, after a period in the doldrums, to challenge some of the affronts to common sense perpetrated in the name of strategic doctrine.

After the "boom" years of the 1950s and early 1960s, many of the academics who had done so much to shape contemporary strategic studies drifted away to new challenges. They were either bored by the difficulties of developing the subject further in the face of military and alliance hostility to some of their more imaginative ideas, or disillusioned by the consequences of the application of their insights in Vietnam. By default they allowed nuclear strategy to be taken over by the practitioners and the Beltway bandits. An inevitable consequence of this was that interest switched from the large questions concerning the relationship between nuclear means to political ends, to narrower concerns much more relevant to short-term policy issues. The questions were reformulated to make them analytically more manageable. The primary problems became those of weapons design, targeting, and arms control negotiations. Expertise could be demonstrated through a mastery of detail.

The transformation of this vital subject into a technical specialty was tolerable only because so much of it seemed so remote from any sort of reality. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde's description of foxhunting as the unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible, strategic studies became the unintelligible in pursuit of the incomprehensible. For academic specialists in international relations, the most important point about the nuances of nuclear strategy, as opposed to the crude fact of the existence of weapons of such destructive power, was their utter irrelevance to everyday international politics, or even to the management of major crises.

But those left in the field took a completely different view. They worked in deadly earnest, convinced that if the United States deprived itself of a credible doctrine for the employment of its nuclear weapons the whole edifice of deterrence might begin to crumble through want of the essential cement of "credibility." Whatever the uninitiated might think about the concept of mutual assured destruction as a deterrent, one black day the country would be outclassed by an opponent more aware of the potential sources of superiority still to be found. The Nixon Administration began the search for additional strategic options; it was continued by the Carter Administration, culminating in 1980 with the adoption of the "countervailing strategy"—better known as PD-59. The Reagan Administration enthusiastically endorsed this approach.

Liberals in the arms control community criticized this trend as soon as it began. But they shared with the strategists the belief that the details of the two sides' force structures really mattered in a fundamental sense, even if they disagreed over the requirements for the desired "stability." Those whose primary field of interest was international politics could not bring themselves to believe that (within obviously broad limits) the variations in force structures mattered that much, except insofar as they could be more or less accommodated in arms control agreements which were in turn largely relevant because of their impact on the atmospherics of East-West relations. They are now being obliged to pay attention once again to the details of doctrine and the composition of the arsenals. This is not because these have suddenly become pivotal to the state of international relations, but because the Administration (and, for that matter, the Kremlin) appears to believe this to be the case. And if they believe it matters, it matters.

This presumption of the pivotal influence of nuclear strategy offends the working assumptions of most students of international relations, particularly those of the "realist" persuasion. Hans Morgenthau, one of the leaders of this school, put a great deal of effort into explaining how the advent of nuclear weapons had made it impos-

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sible to carry on with power politics as usual. He decried the fallacy of "conventionalization"—the attempt to treat nuclear weapons as if they were conventional and to apply to them the ways of thinking about armaments of the pre-nuclear world. Robert Jervis sees the countervailing strategy as a symptom of a resurgence of conventionalization, and it is this that he seeks to expose and counter in this robust polemic.

JERVIS'S book is a painstaking critique of the countervailing strategy, drawing on statements from those responsible for developing the strategy under the Carter and Reagan Administrations. The strategy is examined for its internal logic; its feasibility in terms of systems, and their command and control; its consistency with regard to the introduction of intermediate nuclear forces in Europe and the doctrine of flexible response; the accuracy of assumptions made about Soviet doctrine, capabilities, and likely behavior. Not surprisingly, the strategy is found wanting on all counts.

It might be objected that Jervis exaggerates the weaknesses of his target by collapsing together a number of variants of the countervailing strategy. Some of the supposed inconsistencies might disappear if these variants were taken separately. Harold Brown, for example, may have provided some of the more precise formulations, but he never seemed to take it all as seriously as does Caspar Weinberger. Nor does Jervis make our task easier by failing to put the origins of the strategy in much of a historical or political context. The analysis is essentially of the alternative scenarios with which the strategy might be expected to cope. It therefore comes across as a discussion of hypotheses and contingencies, which is at times rather difficult to follow.

Still, the result is a rigorous and muscular argument in the finest traditions of American strategic studies. It is of note that the book is dedicated to Thomas Schelling, James King, Glenn Snyder, and the late Bernard Brodie. These were the men who were responsible for establishing the approach to nuclear matters that Jervis is following. They have argued that nuclear policy must come to grips with the immense destructive power of nuclear weapons, and that neither side's leaders can protect their countries adequately against this destructive power. Rather than at-

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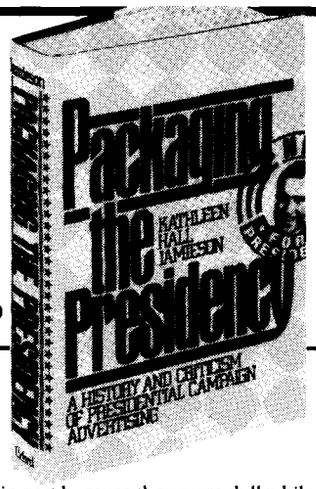

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tempt to deny this reality through the dangerous pretense that nuclear weapons can be treated as if they were no more than super-efficient conventional munitions, this approach sought to draw on the sheer uncertainties and risks involved in any conflict between nuclear powers to deter the Soviet Union from even contemplating aggression and, should hostilities begin, to compel it to withdraw at an early stage before matters got completely out of hand. This was what Schelling described as the "threat that leaves something to chance."

Jervis associates himself with this approach and provides a lucid restatement:

> Mutual assured destruction exists as a fact, irrespective of policy. No amount of flexibility, no degree of military superiority at levels less than all-out war, can change the fundamental attribute of the nuclear age. Not only can each side destroy the other if it chooses, but that outcome can grow out of conflict even if no one wants it to. Most of the dilemmas of U.S. defense policy stem from the vulnerability of its cities, not from policies that might permit the Soviets marginal military advantages in unlikely and terribly risky contingencies. Once each side can destroy the other, any crisis brings up the possibility of this disastrous outcome. Standing firm, although often necessary, has a significant degree of risk which cannot be much reduced by the development of a wide range of military options.

The inability to control the process of escalation with any confidence, and the inescapable reality of massive destruction at the end of this process, provides a powerful disincentive against getting involved in hostilities. Success, in a crisis, might go to the side most skilled in manipulating this shared risk; but, as likely as not, it will go to the side with most at stake, and therefore genuinely capable of demonstrating the greatest resolve.

Leaving things to chance is the negation of strategy. Not surprisingly, it has never found favor with the practitioners. It provides no guidelines for military planning because it is assumed that all plans will be overtaken by events. At certain stages in a conflict, the argument runs, the precise nature of any actions being taken is largely irrelevant so long as something is being done to sustain the sense of shared risk. This uncertainty may produce a formidable deterrent but it is likely to prove crippling should deterrence fail.

The alternative approach, based on the concept of "escalation dominance," argued that one could not have a credible deterrent without a convincing answer to the question of what we should do if deterrence fails. The working assumption has been that distinct stages up the escalation ladder could be identified; if you could ensure dominance at a particular level, then the onus would be on the other side to escalate. In the early 1960s Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara made a rather feeble attempt to implement such a policy before becoming convinced that once the nuclear threshold had been passed escalation would soon get out of control. This is still his position. (Jervis notes that it does not follow from this recognition that nuclear threats are useless as instruments of policy; no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons declarations neglect the deterrent value of leaving things to chance.)

The adoption by NATO of flexible response meant reliance, almost by default, on the deterrent power of uncertainty. Since then there has been a concerted effort by professional strategists to introduce elements of escalation dominance. The countervailing strategy was the result of these efforts. The counterattack to which Jervis is contributing represents the inevitable reaction. It is supported by a variety of other studies which confirm the difficulty of conducting nuclear wars in any sort of controlled fashion.

Whatever its failings, escalation dominance at least provided guidance for the planners. If it falls once again into disrepute, who is to provide the new guidance? As Jervis himself admits, they will get precious little help from his book. Indeed he is content with many of the aspects of force structure that are perfectly compatible with the countervailing strategy.

It is the rationales rather than the actual systems to which he takes exception. All that needs to be done is to create situations for an aggressor that seep with danger. As long as some nuclear weapons are around, that is not very difficult. Deterrence, according to this approach, does not depend on the details of force structure. It may not even depend much on the details of doctrine. The conclusion appears to be that the threat that leaves something to chance is not a function of policy at all but, like assured destruction, a fact of international life.

LAWRENCE FREEDMAN

Lawrence Freedman is a professor of war studies at King's College, London.

HH THE REPUBLICAN

An Uncommon Man: The Triumph of Herbert Hoover by Richard Norton Smith

(Simon & Schuster, 488 pp., $22.95)

The supporters of Herbert Hoover and of Franklin D. Roosevelt, wrote Walter Lippmann in 1935, "would have us believe that Mr. Hoover was the faithful defender of the established traditions and that Mr. Roosevelt is the revolutionary pioneer of the New Deal." That is not history, he went on; it is "partisan mythology." Hoover's record as a "radical innovator" has been greatly underestimated, and Roosevelt's "pioneering" has been greatly exaggerated. The "unprecedented doctrine" that the government has responsibility for the successful operation of the economic order became the "major premise" of the Hoover Administration after October 1929, and it has been the "major premise" of the Roosevelt Administration since March 1933.

Lippmann's thesis is today's conventional wisdom. Yet in spite of the recent surge in Hoover studies, no scholar has treated wholly convincingly the underside of that thesis: Why did Herbert Hoover, so clearly the more profound and, until March 1933, the more enlightened of the two men, fail to respond more directly to the human misery of the Depression?

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Richard Norton Smith, author of a well-received biography of Thomas E. Dewey, here addresses that question more inferentially than directly. His genre is portraiture rather than systematic political history; and though he brings to it an open, informed, and penetrating intelligence, two-thirds of this appropriately ambiguous book is devoted to Hoover's post-Presidential years. Nonetheless, Smith's sharp focus on the interplay between Hoover's temperament and his public policies has probably enabled him to come closer than any other author to explaining Hoover's limitations.

On one level Smith argues that the "uncommon man" he so discerningly characterizes has been unfairly maligned. (F.D.R.'s treatment of Hoover, like that of the early New Deal historians, was spiteful.) On another he holds that Hoover "was the victim of his own certainties." On a third (and more tenuous) level he suggests that Hoover would not have moved so far to the right, would not have become, in Lippmann's words, "the great objector," if the New Dealers or moderate Republicans had welcomed him into their councils after he left office.

For all the redemptive qualities that Smith reads into Hoover, it is paradox and irony that give both the dour Quaker's career and this absorbing book their intellectual tension. Some of the paradoxes were functions of Hoover's consistencies, and some of the ironies were accidents of history. But virtually all were integral to his personality. An optimist by intellect, Hoover was a pessimist by temperament. To sit in his room, reported Henry L. Stimson, "was like sitting in a bath of ink." An indifferent college student who failed freshman English and never made an A, he displayed a formidable mind in his maturity. Shy and reticent, but kind to children and generous to subordinates, he was relentlessly domineering in his business and political relations. "I just want more," he once explained. The British found him "pushy," Winston Churchill pronounced him "a son of a bitch," and Hoover's older brother conceded that many able men broke with him because they could not or would not "play the particular game Herbert Hoover's way." Eugene Meyer of the Federal Reserve Board may well have captured his essence:

> The man's will to power is almost a mania. The idea of good will . . . is strong in him, but he is not interested in the good that must be accomplished . . . through the help of others. Only what is done by Hoover is of any meaning to him. He is a big man but he cannot bear rivalry of any sort.

More paradoxical still, as Smith perceptively notes, Hoover had "a fatal streak of passivity, rooted in his own disdain for the political trenches." It is this streak, perhaps as much as his fierce commitment to "principle," that explains his failure to rise to the full measure of the emergency created by the Depression. Convinced that his Democratic opponents were "swine" and the progressive western Republicans were "disloyal demagogues," Hoover refused to call the Congress elected in November 1930 into special session. Meanwhile, for thirteen bitter months, he presided alone over a steadily worsening economy. By keeping the people's representatives "brooding impotently" in idleness, wrote Lippmann at the time, he has "fastened down . . . the safety valve of popular government."

Contrary to the claims of Hoover's later partisans, Congress did give him the bulk of his program when it finally met. Not until he demanded a sales tax in mid-March 1932 did the Democratic rank and file finally revolt. Meanwhile Hoover reaffirmed his conviction that "the sense of individual and personal responsibility of men to their neighbors" put the obligation for relief upon individuals and state and local governments. He issued twenty separate statements calling for "drastic economy" in government. And he refused to meet with leaders of the Bonus Expeditionary Force. Yet he stoically accepted responsibility when Douglas MacArthur defied his instructions to disperse the remnants of the force with compassion.

Until the day he left the White House, Hoover held fast to most of his principles. He dismissed calls for production controls in agriculture as a threat to liberty. He warned that a Chamber of Commerce proposal to limit production (one of the seed beds of the N.R.A.) would lead to socialism or fascism. And he labeled F.D.R.'s plan for permanent employment of surplus workers on public works "a cruel promise." Not until G.O.P. leaders warned that he faced certain defeat in November did he allow the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to lend $300 million to state and municipal governments for

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direct relief. Then, during a four-month interregnum which revealed Roosevelt to be as cavalier as he himself was doctrinaire, Hoover called on his victorious opponent to affirm his fiscal and monetary policies. "I realize," he confided to one of his few senatorial intimates, that Roosevelt's acquiescence would mean "abandonment of 90 percent of the so-called new deal."

FROM 1933 to the end of World War II Hoover lived in relative obscurity. Quadrennially, to be sure, the Democrats revived him. We ought to be "eternally grateful," Thomas G. Corcoran quipped; he has been "our meal ticket for twelve years." But Alfred M. Landon, Wendell Willkie, and Thomas E. Dewey treated him as a pariah, and Dewey even snubbed him at Willkie's funeral. Restlessly the former President immersed himself in his Boys' Clubs, the Hoover War Library at Stanford, and his Jeremiah-like memoirs.

The coming of war gave Hoover more cause to grumble. A quasi-isolationist ever since the Allies betrayed Woodrow Wilson's peace program at Paris, he believed that the survival of freedom depended on the United States remaining neutral. He approved the destroyers-for-bases deal with the British, but only because the bases bolstered his developing notion of a "Fortress America." He presciently likened the Administration's economic reprisals against Japan in 1940 to "sticking a pin in a rattlesnake." And he pressed Dewey to undertake a cross-country speaking tour against lend-lease. Concurrently, he urged the Allies to allow food into the occupied countries. "There are things in the world," the old humanitarian explained, "that are not settled by ideological argument."

Hoover never forgave F.D.R. for aiding Russia against Germany. "[W]e should have let those two bastards annihilate themselves"; the proposed second front was nothing more than "a bloody sacrifice to Stalin." Nor did he have any illusion that the Allies could fashion an enduring peace. Still, he endorsed the Yalta agreements and insisted that the Atlantic Charter, Moscow Pact, and Dumbarton Oaks contained principles which warranted a "good faith" trial. "We cannot have both peace and revenge," he warned.

It appears that Hoover was partially informed of both the Manhattan Project and Japan's peace feelers in the late spring of 1945. "I am convinced," he told President Harry S Truman in May, "that if you . . . tell [the Japanese] . . . they can have their Emperor if they surrender . . . you'll get peace." But Truman, who had already received similar counsel from Secretary of War Stimson, politely deflected his advice. Like Dwight D. Eisenhower and others, Hoover was appalled by Truman's subsequent decision to drop the atomic bomb. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he said privately, "revolts my soul." He was too flattered by Truman's attention, however, to criticize him openly, or to mark the irony of his acceptance of the Emperor following Japan's surrender.

Hoover's attitude toward Truman warmed further when the President sent him around the world on a fact-finding tour about hunger in 1946. Out of this heroic trip—he cracked his ribs in Venezuela and endured numerous privations elsewhere—came the feeding of three-and-one-half million German youths at soup kitchens, expansion of CARE, and some of the awareness of Europe's plight that made the Marshall Plan politically palatable. Yet the paradoxes persisted. Hoover opposed the loan to Britain in 1947 because of his old grudge against the British. And he feared that the Marshall Plan, to which he gave only nominal support, would drain America's resources.

THE FORMER President's last great service to his country also owed much to his new friend in the White House. Truman had long regarded the overlapping waste and conflicts among executive agencies as scandalous, and when the "do-nothing" Eightieth Congress created a commission to reorganize the executive branch he appointed Hoover chairman. Hoover had expected to prune agencies radically and cut costs drastically, and the recommendations of his nineteen task forces did forward those ends. But, in the crowning irony of his long career, they also institutionalized big government.

Hoover's rehabilitation as a public man failed to stay his movement to the right. Obsessed by the threat of collectivism, he barely distinguished among communism, socialism, and welfarism. Even his once-moderate respect for civil liberties (he never had much for civil rights) went up in the verbal smoke of the cold war. He helped launch Richard Nixon's Congressional career, he approved the "red-baiting" of Senator Joseph McCarthy, and he protested that Truman's loyalty program was too limited. Asked by the President to head a bipartisan commission to investigate Communists in government, he proposed instead "a widespread inquiry into the past and present" of non-Communists who had encouraged cooperation with the Soviet Union.

IN foreign affairs, Hoover's anticommunism clashed with his isolationism and his compulsion to hold down spending. He deplored the inclusion of American divisions in NATO. He suggested that the United States spread radioactive dust along the Yalu River rather than send ground troops to Korea; and he took comfort in Eisenhower's decision not to send combat forces to Indochina. He also helped foster the attitude that denied recognition to Communist China for a quarter of a century. In 1951 he arranged for introduction of a Congressional resolution to prohibit the President from sending troops overseas without consent of Congress. Then, a decade later, he reversed himself completely. "I'm a Quaker and I loathe war," he snapped when the invasion of Cuba floundered, "but . . . if I were President . . . I would order the necessary forces into the Bay of Pigs, and I would decimate that Cuban Army."

Even as Hoover plunged into new controversies, he rekindled old ones. The bulk of his fourteen-hour working days seems to have gone into endless drafts of his three-volume magnum opus, tentatively entitled *Freedom Betrayed*. This "vast mélange of historical accusation and personal recollection," in Smith's characterization, indicted American policymakers for everything from recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933 to the triumph of Mao Tse-Tung sixteen years later. Visitors to Hoover's suite in the Waldorf Towers not infrequently found him double-checking his long lists of the falsehoods of that "gibbering idiot," Roosevelt. Hoover's son Allan had the manuscript discreetly locked in a vault in the war library (renamed the Hoover Institution) following his death in 1964 at the age of 90. (Years earlier Hoover had insisted that the institution emphasize Communist policy studies rather than pure scholarship. To Stanford's continuing embarrassment, he also forced it to be put under a separate board.)

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On the evidence in this engrossing book, Herbert Hoover lived much of his life in suppressed anger. Still, he had a puckish side. He said, and believed, that "the only trouble with capitalism is capitalists; they're too damned greedy." He dripped scorn on the Brain Trust's announcement "to the world . . . that laissez-faire died on March 4, 1933." He conjured up a Tallulah-like explanation for Dewey's lack of intellectual depth: "A man couldn't wear a mustache like that without having it affect his mind." He dubbed Eisenhower "a very expensive President." And he took perverse pride in declaring himself the only man in history knowledgeable enough to start a worldwide depression on his own. He even professed to know why he managed to be honored by the generation that knew not his enemies: "I outlived the bastards."

One leaves *An Uncommon Man* with heightened appreciation of Herbert Hoover's idealism and the enduring strength of some of his principles. As Smith asserts, "the intellectual and moral power" of his position has too long been glossed over. "Rather than charging forward, he was manning the barricades, defending old values clearly spelled out in a life-long search for ways to rid individualism of its greed, and government of its deadening acceptance of mediocrity as the price for security." Hoover was, in truth, a man grievously wronged.

But one also leaves *An Uncommon Man* in frustration. Despite the monumental quality of Hoover's achievements, he was in the last analysis a man unfulfilled, a figure more tragic than triumphant. His flaw was that of intellectual arrogance or, in Smith's more gentle attribution, purism. From it flowed the dogmatic assumptions that his penchant for statistics only partly masked, and from it flowed the self-righteous assertiveness that repeatedly destroyed his personal relations. It was theory, observes Smith, that raised Hoover to the White House. And it was theory that "shackled his imagination and paved the way for his ultimate defeat."

WILLIAM H. HARBAUGH

William H. Harbaugh is Langbourne M. Williams Professor of History at the University of Virginia.

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HH THE DEMOCRAT

Hubert Humphrey: A Biography by Carl Solberg

(Norton, 572 pp., $19.95)

We had hardly settled into our seats on the plane carrying us eastward across the Atlantic when the California college sophomore next to me, noting that I was reading a new book on Hubert Humphrey, asked, "Was he the man who was blown up in the Korean War?" No, I answered; he was Vice President of the United States under Lyndon Johnson. "Oh," the young man responded with a deprecating wave of his hand, "that was *way* before my time."

Forgotten so soon then, Hubert Humphrey who for a generation was so much a part of our lives? He has been gone for only six years. And for a third of a century before his death in 1978 he was an overwhelming presence—crusading mayor of Minneapolis, leader of the civil rights forces at the 1948 Democratic convention, champion of a thousand causes as United States Senator, controversial Vice President of the United States, perpetual Presidential contender, and, above all, orator nonpareil. For thirty years, he talked our ears off. Nobody knew better how to rouse an audience, and no one had less notion of when to stop. ("Hubert," his wife once said to him, "for your words to be immortal, they do not have to be eternal.") But so lovable was he that his admirers would turn out in throngs for his next appearance even though they knew that the evening would end in numbing loquacity.

In a felicitous turn of phrase, Franklin D. Roosevelt, filching a line from Wordsworth, once called Al Smith "the

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happy warrior," but, if there is one figure in the twentieth century who most deserves that sobriquet it is the irrepressible, ever-grinning Hubert Horatio Humphrey. The first time I saw him, at the founding convention of Americans for Democratic Action in January 1947, he wowed the delegates with his never-stop-running personality and his gift for gab, especially when, smiling ear to ear in his country boy manner, he said, "Imagine what my mother would think if she knew that I was on the same platform with Eleanor Roosevelt!" A quarter of a century later, with reason enough to feel blue, already stricken by the bladder cancer that would devour him, he was as effervescent as ever. That year a columnist wrote of him, "He starts at 7, popping like a cork from champagne. And he never stops bubbling."

If the California sophomore does get to read this new biography by Carl Solberg, however, he is likely to come away from it less with the sense of the joy than of the pain of Humphrey's life. Nothing in the beaming countenance of the 35-year-old mayor of Minneapolis at the A.D.A. gathering suggested what he had already gone through. To help his family at the depth of the Great Depression and to support his father's political ambitions, he had been compelled to drop out of college and to surrender, it seemed forever, all of his personal aspirations. At 25, Humphrey was still working unpaid in his father's drugstore in Huron, South Dakota, without even the pocket money for a date. When he finally broke away, at 26, to become an overaged undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, he had to accept a situation as a janitor that required him to put aside his books to swab toilets.

His public career brought him many satisfactions, but also, Solberg emphasizes, more than his share of disappointment. Four times he sought the Presidency, and four times he was rejected. In 1960 the Kennedy steamroller ran over him. He was even held up to contempt as a draft dodger. In 1968 he came ever so close, only to fall short by less than 1 percent of the vote. It was hard to take. The day after the election returns came in, he stood silently with a friend for some moments and then blurted out, "Jesus, I think I would have done a good job in the White House." He confessed to being even more disheartened four years later in failing to win the Democratic nomination despite polling more votes in the primaries than McGovern. That experience did not stop him, though, from trying yet another time in 1976, once more with the same unhappy result.

WITH insight rare in a politician, Humphrey recognized that these repeated quests for the White House threatened to make him, like his fellow Minnesotan, Harold Stassen, an absurdity. In 1972 he told a confidant, "I'm not at all sure that I ought to be interested in any way in this Presidential business. I've been around so long, and so many people have analyzed and reanalyzed me, that there's very little left to look at that hasn't been exposed in its full nudity and at times ugliness." Later that year, he turned down an invitation from McGovern to replace Tom Eagleton in the number two place on the ticket with the explanation: "I just can't take the ridicule any more. You know that if I take that nomination, they'll just say: 'There goes old Hubert over the track again. He just can't resist running.' "

By then, Humphrey had reason enough for concern. When he emerged as a Presidential contender in 1972, Hunter Thompson said, "He was a swine in '68 and he's worse now." And in his column in the *New York Post*, Pete Hamill commented: "There was a time when Humphrey was a reasonably brave liberal politician, but he lost that somewhere along the line. It's possible to salute the record of his youth: all whores were once virgins. In the unlikely event that there were War Crimes trials in this country, Humphrey would be in the dock. The destination would not be 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, it would be Leavenworth."

All of this venom, and not a little of Humphrey's failure to win the coveted goal of the White House, derive from just four years in his life—the Vice Presidency under Johnson—and that critical interval is the real subject of Carl

ZEPHYR

The silver light that shines on the floor
through the branches of the silver birch
is watery because the sky
is full of water. Spring has arrived
in its usual difficult backward way,
messy and careless, blowing hot and cold,
mucking things up.
You could be its zephyr with your cheeks
ruddy and bursting,
aloft and leaning into the change,
the new breeze pushing the curls at your forehead back,
brave, like a snapping pennant
or a kite defining the currents over
the soggy fields, or charting the boundaries
in your sweatsuit on the horizon,
hard to make out except for your lope,
your canter which can be read
for hundreds of yards like the words
they trail over beaches in summer:
READ THIS, DRINK THIS, BUY THIS . . .

BE THIS, you seem to be saying, BE
A PART OF THIS, as the naked trees
sway in their willing way and the young sun
still fails to break through the strength of the clouds
hovering over the parti-colored crowd,
and gusts of not unfriendly wind transport you
everywhere, though nowhere we have been.

JONATHAN GALASSI

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Solberg's book. Former associate editor of *Time* and author of three previous volumes, including a dissection of cold war America, Solberg has written less a biography than an account of the damage wrought by Humphrey's inability to break free from Johnson's disastrous misadventure in Vietnam. Solberg allots only 111 pages to the long stretch from 1949 through 1964, the period of Humphrey's greatest achievement, but 176 pages to the four years of the Vice Presidency. Inevitably that distribution is hurtful to Humphrey's historical reputation.

Quite apart from the issue of emphasis, the book is flawed in a number of ways. The author repeats himself again and again; offers contradictory explanations for the causes of events; makes extravagant statements about the national mood in 1968; and spins out an altogether unconvincing theory that Humphrey was defeated in 1968 not by discontent over Vietnam but by "the recurrent Progressive syndrome in modern American politics," the incapacity of liberals to sustain reform. There are also some glaring errors. We are told about Humphrey's visit to the Jefferson Memorial in 1935, some years before it was built; and we read of the impact of the child labor amendment, which had no impact because it was never ratified.

Yet these shortcomings are more than offset by the contributions the book makes. Solberg has given us the first substantial study of Humphrey that draws upon his huge cache of papers at the Minnesota Historical Society. He has also mined the archives at four Presidential libraries; consulted collateral collections such as those of A.D.A. at the University of Wisconsin; gotten access to the revealing medical files and diary of Humphrey's physician and friend, Dr. Edgar Berman; used any number of oral histories; and conducted scores of interviews. As a consequence, Solberg has been able to put together an arresting account of Humphrey's public life, especially of his ill-fated Vice Presidency.

In vivid detail, Solberg reveals how demeaning was Humphrey's servitude to Lyndon Johnson. In 1964 the President tortured Humphrey by keeping him in doubt to the very last second as to whether he would be his running mate, and then told him, "If you didn't know you were going to be Vice President a month ago, you're too damn dumb to have the office." Still smarting from the ignominy of being Kennedy's understudy, Johnson begrudged Humphrey any light that would dim his own luster. After Humphrey had delivered a highly effective address at the Democratic convention, Johnson abruptly ordered him to appear at the L.B.J. ranch where he handed him a riding costume many sizes too big for him and put him on a horse that nearly threw him. Cameramen recorded his humiliation, and reporters snickered. The whole scene, Nicholas Katzenbach said later, was "almost like Johnson holding Humphrey up by the ears the way he did with his beagle."

Nor would Johnson permit Humphrey to express any dissenting views on policy. "This is like a marriage with no chance of divorce," the President informed him. "I need complete and unswerving loyalty." Humphrey thought that this circumscription still left him the option of differing in private. Not so. In February 1965 he spoke out boldly at an advisory meeting for delay in retaliating against a Viet Cong mortar attack that had killed twenty-three Americans, and then sent the President a powerful memo counseling him to turn back from his course of escalating the war. A month later, he persisted in writing yet another memo critical of the

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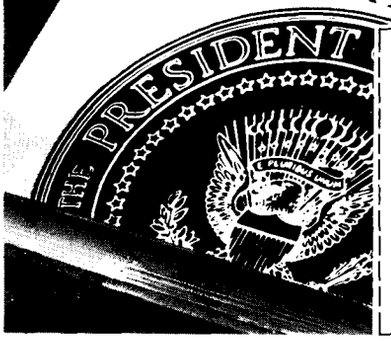

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Administration's behavior. "We do not need all these memos," Johnson chided him. "I don't think you should have them lying around your office." Thereafter, the President kept Humphrey out of the main deliberations on Southeast Asia.

BEFORE long, Humphrey was flinging himself into defense of the war with the same ardor that he displayed toward worthier causes. He insisted that American bombers exercised extraordinary care to spare the lives of civilians, and he claimed that only the Viet Cong committed atrocities. Some of Humphrey's statements on the war still make painful reading. In Saigon, he said, "I believe that Vietnam will be marked as the place where the family of man has gained the time it needed to finally break through to a new era of hope and human development and justice. . . . This is our great adventure—and a wonderful one it is!" Some of his critics were willing to concede that he had no choice save to go along with Johnson, but Irving Howe spoke for many in asking, "Does he have to agree with such damned rapture?" And Humphrey's performance, while alienating his friends, still did not win him the President's respect. When the Johnsons came to Humphrey's apartment for dinner, the President deliberately degraded the Vice President by making him stand up in his own living room and deliver a speech in favor of the Vietnam War. As he began to talk, Johnson headed for the bathroom. "Keep talkin', Hubert," he instructed. "I'm listenin'."

Even when he won the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1968, Humphrey bore the L.B.J. brand. After Humphrey's supporters worked out a carefully drafted plank to nudge the government in the direction of a bombing halt, Johnson told Humphrey that "That plank undercuts our whole policy and, by God, the Democratic Party ought not to be doing this to me, and you ought not to be doing it—you've been part of this policy." So Humphrey, despite being the Democratic nominee, was left with no plank of his own on Vietnam in 1968. *Esquire* showed him on its cover as a ventriloquist's dummy seated on Johnson's lap.

This subservience gained Humphrey nothing. At the outset Johnson refused to release party funds to him, would not campaign for him, and grumbled that Nixon was more loyal to his Vietnam program than Humphrey. After a long holdout, he agreed to see Humphrey, then abruptly canceled the meeting as the Vice President was seen hurrying through the White House gate. When Humphrey finally did make a partial departure from the Administration's policy in his Salt Lake City speech, he infuriated Johnson but delayed too long to win the race. Afterwards, at a time when Humphrey's wounds were still raw, the President asked him to dine at the White House, only to tell him that, by failing to heed Johnson's advice, Humphrey had blown it.

WHY did Humphrey put up with this treatment? Solberg suggests that the explanation lies in his troubled youth. A man who had found it so hard to break away from his father found it even more difficult to split with as intimidating a "father" as Johnson. Solberg sees the years of exile Humphrey spent in his father's store as "a classic young-adult crisis of the kind that Erik Erikson described in writing about Luther and Gandhi," an identity crisis, the symptoms of which were fainting spells and a nervous stomach, ailments that vanished when he struck out on his own. Six months after the fateful decision to accept Johnson's plank on Vietnam, Humphrey is alleged to have said, "I had become like the oldest son—and I couldn't make a break."

Perhaps. But other explanations, some of which Solberg also offers, may be more telling. The most obvious one is that it is extraordinarily difficult for a Vice President to break publicly with a President, especially in the midst of a bloody war. In addition, Humphrey was attuned to the ideological justification for the war. He had been a longtime believer in collective security and carried the scars of the Communist Party's vicious tactics in Minnesota. Though he had been remarkably conciliatory to the left as mayor of Minneapolis, he had been spat upon at the Democratic Farmer Labor convention and, though he was the most important officeholder in the party, prevented by threat of force from speaking. In February 1966 he told reporters, "I fought those bastards then and I'm going to fight them now."

Furthermore, Humphrey, though in every other way unself-regarding to a fault, had a bad case of Potomac fever, felt a deep obligation to Johnson for elevating him to high national office, and thought the President's good favor was indispensable if he were to achieve his cherished goal of the White House. A year after the election, he held a different view. "It would have been better that I stood my ground and remembered that I was fighting for the highest office in the land," Humphrey reflected ruefully. "I ought not to have let a man who was going to be a former President dictate my future." Little wonder, then, that Solberg gives so much space to this ordeal, or that, when asked by my plane companion to identify Humphrey, I instinctively replied that he was Vice President of the United States under Lyndon Johnson.

BUT surely there are other reasons that a college student ought to know about Humphrey. Even his critics must concede that he did more than any official of his generation to further the cause of civil rights. In a brilliant eight-minute speech to the 1948 Democratic national convention he inspired the delegates to take a forthright stand on behalf of the rights of black Americans, and sixteen years later he shepherded the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 through Congress. Not too proud to compromise ("I would have kissed Dirksen's ass on the Capitol steps," he once said), he also knew when to hold firm, and in the end he won a significant victory.

At no point did his political ambitions lead him to waver from his commitment to civil rights. At a time when he might well have sought to diminish George Wallace's attraction to factory workers by toning down his statements on civil rights, Humphrey told whites in riot-torn New Jersey that it was essential for people of both races to cooperate; and even when Johnson was tormenting him with the prospect of denying him the Vice Presidential nomination that he so badly wanted, he did not falter. Joe Rauh, who represented a black faction from Mississippi at the 1964 Democratic convention, has said, "Each night before I went to bed I would go to Humphrey's suite and try to extract some further concession for the Freedom Party. We would be alone at four in the morning negotiating. Never once, even with his Vice Presidency at stake did he say, 'Joe, please, for all the years we've worked together, accept this settlement to help me.' To me, that

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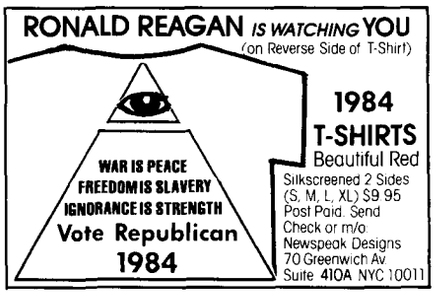
. . . represented the highest standard of political ethics that I have witnessed in my lifetime."

And there is more. As early as 1957 Humphrey advocated what became the Peace Corps. In the Eisenhower years, too, he promoted a program for training impoverished young people that subsequently emerged as the Job Corps. His idea of using farm surpluses in foreign aid came to fruition as Food for Peace. His long campaign for disarmament contributed to the creation of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the test ban treaty. As Vice President he helped put through the Senate a wide range of Great Society programs from federal aid to education to Medicare.

Humphrey might have had a hard time accepting that all these achievements would be remembered. Asked in 1971 when he would get out from under Johnson's unpopularity, Humphrey replied, "Never." In his final years, he bore the double misery of recollections of the tribulations of his Vice Presidency and the invasive cancer that spared him nothing, neither in pain nor in indignity. But as he was dying he was told that a *Washington Post* poll of a thousand people had chosen him the greatest Senator of the past seventy-five years. "Jesus Christ," Humphrey said, "Lyndon Johnson's going to be sore as hell about this."

WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG

William E. Leuchtenburg, William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is the author of *In the Shadow of F.D.R.: From Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan* (Cornell University Press).



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MOMENTS OF TRUE FEELING

The Weight of the World
by Peter Handke
translated by Ralph Manheim

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 243 pp., $16.95)

This is the first book by Peter Handke to be published here since 1978, though he has been active since then and translations of the later works are promised. Handke, an Austrian, was 28 when his American career began, with *Kaspar and Other Plays*. By 1978 he had published another volume of plays (which, as with the earlier group, had been given many productions), had published four novels, two volumes of poetry, and a memoir of his mother, had directed a film of one of his novels: and had become an artist of international value.

In the theater he has been an innovator, a revolutionary who is impatient with accepted revolutionary concepts. From this new book:

> Think away the naturalistic forms until didactic, demonstrative forms (Brecht) result: think away the didactic forms until mythical forms result (my writing)

In his prose he has questioned other acceptances; he has moved past postwar desolation, reliance on desolation, to a view of starkness as privilege, a triumph through austerity. Inseparable from this movement is his rigor toward his cultural inheritance, the immediate Germanic past; inseparable, too, is his rigor toward the German language—toward the idea of language, its susceptibility to deceptions. Presumably inspired by Wittgenstein, Handke has striven to purge his inheritance, especially the language, with honesties of response, thought, expression. In both the philosophic and artistic senses, he can be seen as a penitent.

His new book, *The Weight of the World*, is a combined journal and writer's notebook. First published in Austria in 1977, the book covers the period from November 1975 through March 1977 when Handke was living in Paris with his small daughter, referred to as A. During this period he was seeing an analyst, he spent some time in a hospital—apparently with a heart at-

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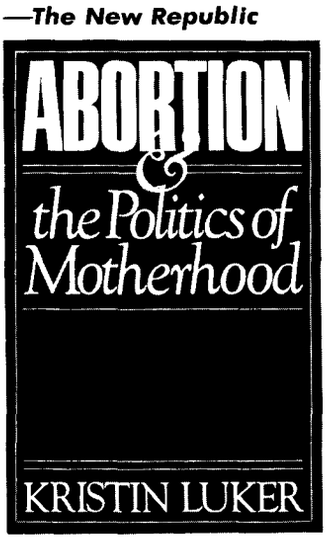

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tack—and he made a trip to Los Angeles. (Not one line about the trip itself.) During this period, too, he published his novel, *A Moment of True Feeling*, which deals with an Austrian, employed by his embassy in Paris, who lives with his small daughter; and Handke also worked on his film, *The Left-Handed Woman* which, as novel, is set in Germany but which he shot in Paris. These works are adumbrated in *The Weight of the World*.

What do we expect from a book of this sort? The sort includes Kafka's *Diaries*, mentioned by Handke, and comparable books by dissimilar authors: Chekhov's *Notebook*, Samuel Butler's *Notebooks*, Fitzgerald's *The Crack-Up* (the "Note-Books" section). Obviously such a book can't be read as an organic work, and a reader is not likely to pick up such a book without a previous interest in the author. But after granting those points, what do we expect from it?

ONE fact that makes a difference in expectation is the time when it appears. All four of the other books cited above were published posthumously and are thus (blessedly lucky) instances of the Higher Snooping. However, Handke himself put this book forward; more, he worked over the English version with the exemplary Ralph Manheim and eliminated a total of ten pages from the German original. Because the author himself gives it to us and because of the book's material, the reader is inescapably reminded of Kafka's Hunger Artist, who said, "I always wanted you to admire my fasting." But the Hunger Artist explains that he didn't choose to fast, he couldn't help it; and somewhat in the same manner, Handke is justified. His book is exposition, not exhibition.

Still, the only right criterion for a book of this sort, especially if the author himself presents it, is to expect every entry to be a gem: of illuminating privacy or artistic gestation or relevant experience. Of course this expectation is never wholly satisfied, but it seems fair. Handke, particularly in his earlier pages, presents too many rhinestones. Here are two of them, complete:

> A woman went by and my heart stood still

> Need for philosophy

(He puts no periods at the ends of entries.) Numerous other entries are equally dim; instead of ten pages, a total of something like a third of the book could have been beneficially dropped. But well over half of the entries are indeed gems—of varying depth and brilliance.

MANY of the entries could be subsumed under headings. One such recurrent sort is the epiphanized commonplace, the very ordinary experience seen extraordinarily—a mode that readers will remember from Handke's novels:

> Defiantly the woman in the café butters her bread, enjoying a brief respite from her routine unhappiness

> The moment I enter the department store I seem automatically, under the neon light, to put on an idiotic face

> I prepare myself for the hug, but also for the embarrassment after it

> Brief feeling of warmth during the day when I know that a rare film or a football game will be shown on television that evening (even when, as usual, I have no intention of tuning in)

> A beautiful, serious-looking woman. Suddenly her frozen face bursts into a smile—it's as if she were making water

Another sort of entry, plentiful throughout, is the severe self-judgment:

> I'm not quick-tempered, that would be an attractive vice; I only lack self-control

> Boredom as a feeling that one is leading the wrong life. . . .

> Saw a performance of one of my plays: learned to bear guilt feelings with equanimity

Films, as one would foresee, figure prominently in Handke's sensory day and in his imaginative store. European film masters matter to him (there is a gentle passage on Bresson), but it is Hollywood—and much else in American culture—that has really affected the way he inhabits his life. (The novel of his that is set in America, *Short Letter, Long Farewell*, ends with a visit to John Ford as to a guru.) Handke is takingly candid about his private uses of star mythology: "Much easier to run around with a dish towel for an apron when I think of Cary Grant doing it in a movie." Yet it is far from gallery gush to describe Henry Fonda's Abraham Lincoln "with his bodily movements as calm and clear as letters from another Bible; I had to take a deep breath to keep from crying." And one of the most piercing lines in the book: "When I come out of the movies, the people in

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the street are always the wrong people." This is not a sigh for thwarted escapism, but a comment on possibility and its enemies.

Many, many of the entries are about observing, learning from, his small daughter. ("A. said to me, 'You speak Italian the way I swim.' ") In one aspect, the author is leading a double life: he is trying to scrap everything in his mind that survives just because it is traditional, yet he is nourished by his daughter in an ancient way. An irony results: the truth of what her life does for him only underscores his needs. Implicitly he would like to straighten out the world for her before she comes to understand what it and she lack.

One more theme must be noted—death. Handke's hospital stay underscores the theme, but it is not new for him; it has always been a counterpoint to his life.

> Sometimes the consciousness of death strikes me as a bet (though I couldn't say whom I was betting with) and as such amuses me in a way
>
> Lying there with my eyes closed, I deliberately thrust out my lower lip, so as not to look like a corpse in my own mind
>
> Convinced that I must forget the past entirely if I am to recover from this pain in my chest: *I must lose my memory!* In opposition to the sheltered bourgeois consciousness with its love of memory and remembered view of itself (my battle against the memory that has hemmed me since childhood, memory threatens me with death!)

This last entry resonates against the matters raised earlier—his struggle with the self that the past gave him.

For us, at our end of the translation-publication process, *The Weight of the World*, though warmly welcome, is an interim book, while we wait for work that has already been written, let alone what may come after it. Still, this book, lapses and all, is not to be discounted: it has its own wry, painful, lovely rewards. Yet when Handke's subsequent books appear, this one may seem to grow, as it fits into a progressing career.

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

THE RETURN OF TED HUGHES

River
by Ted Hughes

(Harper & Row, 79 pp., $12.95)

Whatever happened to Ted Hughes? The editors of the recent *Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry* offer the polite answer. To explain his absence from their anthology, they write: "Ted Hughes is a remarkable writer but no longer the presiding spirit of British poetry." In this country too—or so is my impression from the general reckonings over the past decade—he's been put on a high shelf and forgotten.

Tastes change. The one for the manner of Hughes, for its back-of-the-brain strategies and muscled rhetoric, did. The height of his celebrity came with *Crow* in 1971, self-described as "hairy and slobbery, glossy and raw." Tastes have grown more tempered in the interval. Even as in America there has been a shift of interest, a change of pitch—from, say, the engaged moral ferocity of Lowell to the loose-limbed plangencies of Ashbery—so, too, in England it has emerged that Geoffrey Hill was the truly difficult poet, that Phillip Larkin had an eerie staying power, and that Seamus Heaney could more successfully mine the deep deposits of landscape and history. Over here, in the meantime, Hughes himself seemed to have become less a contemporary figure and more like one of his own creations, a legend of himself, lurking in biographies of Sylvia Plath as a demon-doll for feminists to stick pins in.

Meantime, too, he wrote a series of books—disastrous, really—that undid all the coiled energy and poised attention of his early work. When "The Thought-Fox" first fluttered the henhouse of English poetry in 1957, Hughes seemed a force of nature. When I think back now on poems like "Pike" and "Thrushes," on "Thistles" and "Gnat-Psalm," I remember a pulsing, nearly ritualistic intelligence, a de-

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scriptive and rhythmical precision. But from *Crow* on, the lines seemed to come unstitched, the mythic gestures sounded hollow. *Gaudete*'s novelistic imbroglio (a cross between *The Bacchae* and *Cold Comfort Farm*) and *Moortown*'s farming diary were both shambling affairs. Perhaps because of Hughes's work during this period in the theater, one felt his lines were no longer written but delivered, and played to the balcony; because of his writing for children, it seemed he dealt in the most obvious ways with Fantasy and Significance, and the results were banal.

But whatever the poet's misjudgments have been, it would be an error on any reader's part to underestimate Hughes's capacity to change. In a way he has always been a restless poet, experimenting now with voices, now with subjects, his head cocked for a new access to imaginative strength, whether ecstatic or elemental. *River* marks such a change in his career. If it seems a leap forward it has been accomplished by retracing his steps, and so perhaps it should be called not a change but a recovery. It is a welcome and an exciting one.

The poems stand up very well indeed, one by one. Yet the book is really an elaborate sequence. The title tells all. Though many rivers are invoked, and some named (the Dee, the Sligachan, the Gulkana), the sequence starts with the idea of river—first seen, as in the mind's eye, from a great height:

> This is the sun's oiled snake, dangling, fallen,
> The medicinal mercury creature
>
> Sheathed with the garb, in all its inscribed scales,
> That it sheds
> And refreshes, spasming and whispering.

What follows is drawn by "the long ropes of light/Hauling the river's cargo/The oldest commerce." In closer focus, we see the seasons the river reflects, the small lives that live on it (oak and catkin, cormorant, the blood-mote mosquito, the old anglers), the trout and salmon that move mysteriously beneath it, a world before man that includes him: "I share it a little," the poet says.

Hughes evokes these lives with all the quickened wonder of his early style. Here is part of "An Eel":

> Eerie the eel's head.
> This full, plum-sleeked fruit of evolution.
> Beneath it, her snout's a squashed slipper-face,
> The mouth grin-long and perfunctory,
> Undershot predatory. And the iris, dirty gold
> Distilled only enough to be different
> From the olive lode of her body,
> The grained and woven blacks.

It is Hughes's habit, as it was for Keats and D. H. Lawrence and Marianne Moore, to move description toward allegory. And so the eel is moralized:

> Her life is a cell
> Sealed from event, her patience
> Global and furthered with love
> By the bending stars as if she
> Were earth's sole initiate. Alone
> In her millions, the moon's pilgrim,
> The nun of water.

His underwater creatures are primitive but not grotesque: sleek muscle, "bowed and fervent,/But their hearts are water." There is something inherently touching about descriptions of this threatened and vanishing life, as well as a fascinating vocabulary. And Hughes's refracted perspective allows him the transparency of natural calm and meditative depth; it dispels the violence, even as it magnifies the power and fragility. In a "River Barrow" the poet watches, his senses indistinguishable from the scene:

> A wobbly, wavering balance of light
> Mercury precarious in its sac
> Leans to the weir's edge, spilling. Dog-bark stillness.
> A wood-pigeon is buffing the far edges
> Of the smoothing peace.
> Great weight
> Resting effortless on the weightless.
> A cow's moo moves through the complex
> Of internestled metals, a moon-spasm
> Through interfolded underseas. I lie here,
> Half-unearthed, an old sword in its scabbard,
> Happy to moulder. Only the river moves.

The whole book is similarly unhurried but taut. There is a dark wit (as in "Ophelia") or a delicate wit (as in "Japanese River Tales"), a masterful ease that neither avoids nor belabors its effects. Let me quote one short poem entire, the better to give a sense of the poet's exquisite control. The poem is called "Night Arrival of Seatrout."

> Honeysuckle hanging her fangs.
> Foxglove rearing her open belly.
> Dogrose touching the membrane.
>
> Through the dew's mist, the oak's mass
> Comes plunging, tossing dark antlers.
> Then a shattering
> Of the river's hole, where something leaps out—
>
> An upside-down, buried heaven
> Snarls, moon-mouthed, and shivers.
>
> Summer dripping stars, biting at the nape.
> Lobworms coupling in saliva.
> Earth singing under her breath.
>
> And out in the hard corn a horned god
> Running and leaping
> With a bat in his drum.

Of course Hughes is up to something more than evocative writing, and the erotic transfiguring in the poem I've just quoted tells what. There is everywhere in this book an Ovidian resonance: "So the river is a god/Knee-deep among reeds, watching men,/Or hung by the heels down the door of a dam." And if *River* is, finally, a fable, I would dip back to another sequence of poems about a river for the key. At the end of his 1820 sonnet-series *The River Duddon*, Wordsworth sounds the organ note:

> I see what was, and is, and will abide;
> Still glides the Stream, and shall forever glide;
> The Form remains, the Function never dies;
> While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
> We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
> The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
> Enough, if something from our hands have power
> To live, and act, and serve the future hour.

Hughes is up to no less. The last half-dozen poems in *River* rise to Wordsworth's point in identifying the river with art itself. Still, Hughes gives it a personal inflection. It is hard not to detect a wry self-portrait in "October Salmon":

> Already a death-patched hero. So quickly it's over!
>
> So briefly he roamed the gallery of marvels!
> Such sweet months, so richly embroidered into earth's beauty-dress,
> Her life-robe—
> Now worn out with her tirelessness, her insatiable quest,
> Hangs in the flow, a frayed scarf—
>
> The autumnal pod of his flower,
> The mere hull of his prime, shrunk at shoulder and flank.

And then, in "Fairy Flood," to witness the relation of poet to muse:

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The fatherly landscape upbraids and harangues,
Claws weakly at her swollen decision
With gaping beard and disarrayed robe,
Undoes his stained bandages,
Exposes his bone-open wounds—

The river cries out once, tosses her hair, hides her eyes,
Bleeding him empty remorselessly.

The Form remains, says Wordsworth—the river, the idea of the river, the enabling "power" that is the source of both river and poem. This new volume by Ted Hughes is the evidence of that power and an eloquent tribute to it:

The river walks in the valley singing
Letting her veils blow—

A novelty from the red side of Adam.

April in the lift of her arm
December in the turn of her shoulder

As if her sauntering were a long stillness.

She who has not once tasted death.

J. D. McCLATCHY

J. D. McClatchy, a poet and critic, teaches at Princeton University.

TRB, *from page 4*

there's a letter from D.N.C. Chairman Chuck Manatt: "You have been individually selected from among the qualified voters in your state to participate in an important national project. . . ."

Craver denies that these are gimmicks. "There's a difference between a gimmick and the effect of a mailing piece." Well what, in Craver's opinion, is a gimmick? He showed me a package from a fundamentalist church in which a woman claims to have seen Jesus in her napkin, and actually includes a paper napkin with Shroud-of-Turin-type markings on it.

O.K. There's a difference between harmless mood-setting devices and outright deception. But how much difference is there between the holy napkin and this mailing from Craver for the D.N.C.? The outside envelope is an official-looking grey and says, URGENT! FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION DATA ENCLOSED. Inside, along with a letter from Manatt, is what appears to be a green-and-white computer printout from the F.E.C., complete with little holes up the sides, reporting how much money the Republicans are raising. A footnote confesses that these are "figures compiled by the D.N.C." But, apart from this, every effort has been made to make the sheet look like an official document. "Document 441104-001-XBN," it proclaims. "Page 79. Summary Sheet: PC50114."

The phony F.E.C. report is included in the package, Craver amiably explained, "to give it credibility." Once again that's "credibility," in the sense of conveying an impression, as opposed to *credibility*, in the sense of being worthy of belief.

As people become inured to each new gimmick, maintaining "credibility" requires ever-higher levels of guile. A recent fund-raising package from the Mondale campaign, for example, begins with a letter from Timothy Finchem, the campaign finance director. "Dear Mr. Softtouch:" it says. "Mr. Mondale asked me to send to you a copy of the attached campaign memorandum." Attached is an ostensible memo from Finchem to Mondale (INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION), urging Mondale to overcome his reluctance and ask "our generous longtime supporters" for more money. Scrawled across the top in blue ink are the words, "Boss—Can we distribute this? Tim."

So far, standard B.S. But how about this? There's another message scrawled at the top in what appears to be handwriting: "Tim—cc: Mr. Bob Beckel, Mr. Jim Johnson, Mr. Stanley Softtouch, Mr. John Reilly—Fritz." The other names are top Mondale campaign officials.

It's hard to even count the layers of artifice here. Finchem didn't really write either the cover letter or the alleged memorandum for Mondale. The memo is not an "inter-office communication"—it was created specifically to mail out. Mondale's direct-mail consultant, Robert Smith, told me it was "a rewrite" of a real memo, then, when pressed, said, "I don't recall . . . it might have been a couple." Of course, Finchem never asked Mondale's permission to distribute it, and Mondale never asked Finchem to send a copy to Stanley Softtouch.

Yet Smith seemed genuinely dumbfounded by my suggestion that the package could be considered "deceptive." "People increasingly want to be dealt with one to one and more personally," he said sincerely. "Technology permits you to do that."

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

The Engineer of Human Souls by Josef Skvorecky (Knopf). An epic novel of a Czech émigré's life. (Reviewed 8/27/84)

The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit by Sherry Turkle (Simon & Schuster). The inner consequences of the new technology. (8/13&20/84)

Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm by Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge University Press). Marx meets Buddha in Siberia; a scholarly study of a strange corner of the world. (8/6/84)

Motives for Fiction by Robert Alter (Harvard University Press). Occasional critical writings that transcend their occasion. (7/9/84)

Infante's Inferno by G. Cabrera Infante (Harper & Row). Outrageous memories of a Havana boyhood. (7/9/84)

Concrete by Thomas Berhard (Knopf). A study of despair by a major Austrian novelist. (8/13&20/84).

Behind the Mask: On Sexual Demons, Sacred Mothers, Transvestites, Gangsters, Drifters and Other Japanese Cultural Heroes by Ian Buruma (Pantheon). Everything you wanted to know. (8/13&20/84)

Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941-1960 by Ronald H. Spector (Center of Military History, U.S. Army). The accomplished first volume in a history of the Army's tortuous experience in Vietnam. (7/2/84)

An American Procession by Alfred Kazin (Knopf). The brilliant culmination of a critic's lifelong look at American literature. (6/18/84)

Dawn to the West by Donald Keene (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston). 2,000 pages informatively covering the modern literature of Japan. (6/25/84)

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Mixed Messages

THE FIRST TIME I READ Orwell's *Animal Farm*, in high school, I thought the message about the changing laws of the pigs was sinister. Remember their Seven Commandments? No animal shall drink alcohol; No animal shall kill any other animal; All animals are equal; and so on. In what is depicted as a very devious process, these commandments are transformed: No animal shall drink alcohol *to excess*; No animal shall kill any other animal *without cause*; all animals are equal, *but some are more equal than others*. In law school, however, I was taught that this process is benign. Sometimes the qualifying clause is just common sense, and sometimes it's necessary in order to achieve a just result. Thou shalt not kill—except in self-defense, under duress, or while temporarily insane. The First Amendment forbids Congress to make any law respecting establishments of religion, speech, or of the press—but Congress has made countless laws respecting First Amendment freedoms. (Commercial advertisements are less protected than political ones; it's illegal to yell fire in a crowded theater; etc.) The author of Newspeak wasn't so unsophisticated, though; he realized that the fact that a process was common, or even necessary, didn't mean that it was benign. *Animal Farm* might slip easily into the reading list of any law school course on the theory of statutory interpretation, but its better readers are still laymen, whose consciences are more easily needled.

THE PROMISE OF THE Olympic Games in Los Angeles, as evidenced by the TV ads of its sponsors, was that any kid who can skip a rock can win an Olympic gold medal someday. The promise of the Games to its official sponsors was a little different. Their "contribution," which they could write off, didn't have to be paid entirely in cash. Some could be in the form of Olympics advertising, like all those corny dad-and-son training sessions. Thus routine marketing expenses are suddenly classifiable as tax-deductible expenses. Proud sponsors indeed.

-GATE: SUFFIX (ORIGIN: CIRCA 1972), the Watergate, a hotel and office complex on the east bank of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Usage: appended to nouns to create catchwords for scandals or news stories that smack of hanky-panky. (1.) **Watergate**, the discovered break-in at the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee by the "Plumbers," initiating a two-year political scandal that ended with the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon on August 9, 1974. (2.) **Koreagate**, influence-peddling by Korean businessman Tongsun Park, who doled out hundreds of thousands of dollars to twenty-five members of Congress. (3.) **Billygate**, influence-peddling by Libyans who reportedly gave money to President Jimmy Carter's brother Billy. (4.) **Debategate**, the acquisition by the Reagan campaign staff of incumbent President Carter's briefing book prior to the 1980 televised debate between the two candidates. (5.) **Quartergate**, the 1984 Massachusetts scandal involving transportation officials stealing $500,000 in coins from parking meters. (6.) **New Yorkergate**, the revelation of disreputable journalistic practices of Alistair Reid, longtime writer for *The New Yorker*, a magazine touted for the accuracy and comprehensiveness of its fact-checking; considered by some to be proof of the trend toward use of the suffix to create catchwords about increasingly trivial news stories, perhaps signaling the complete digestion, after ten years, of the Watergate scandal, or of media need, now constant, for similar heydays.

THERE WAS A TIME in my life when I thought that many of my adult years would be spent studying James Joyce's monumental novel *Ulysses*. I was wrong. But for those folks who have thus spent their years, this past June 16, "Bloomsday" as Joyceans affectionately know it, was very special. It was the publication date of an expensive new edition of the novel in which approximately five thousand typographical and compositor's errors have been corrected. (The manuscript was single-spaced, and Joyce, whose handwriting was execrable, crammed one hundred thousand words into the margins of the page proofs; furthermore, the typesetting was done in France by typesetters who didn't read English. Talk about publishing nightmares!) Anyone who has read *Ulysses* can understand how a book with thousands of errors in its standard edition could nevertheless become one of the most influential novels in our language and the object of more scholarly studies than the uncorrected edition had errors. Many of the authors of those studies, essays, dissertations, and appreciations have given this new edition a reception that is predictably reverent. For example, in an early chapter, five lines of dialogue are restored: "Will he not see reborn in her, with the memory of his own youth added, another image?/Do you know what you are talking about? Love, yes. Word known to all men. *Amor véro aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus. . . .*" Richard Ellmann and Hugh Kenner, two Joyce scholars with impeccable credentials, told *The New York Times* that the restoration of these lines may change the interpretation of the entire book. You might wonder what on earth the lines themselves mean, much less how they could change the interpretation of an 800-page novel. The reason they are deemed so crucial is that they are echoed in a hallucinatory scene near the book's climax by Stephen Dedalus, who exclaims to the ghost of his mother, "Tell me the word, Mother, if you know now. The word known to all men." If that fails to clear things up, maybe what scholars used to say about these lines will be helpful: "He [Stephen] is asking his mother from beyond the grave for aid in his sexual power. . . ." Or this: ". . . the 'word' that is revealed to each individual after his death. Negatively, the word is 'never to return'; positively, it is the Eternal Word, the Logos, Christ. 'Known to all men' means that both phases of the word can be known as mysteries in this life but cannot be known as realities until after his death. . . .' " There was a reason I left academia. Joyce once said to the translator of *Ulysses*, Jacques Benoîst-Méchin, "I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality."

MARC GRANETZ

Marc Granetz is a summer associate at a Boston law firm.

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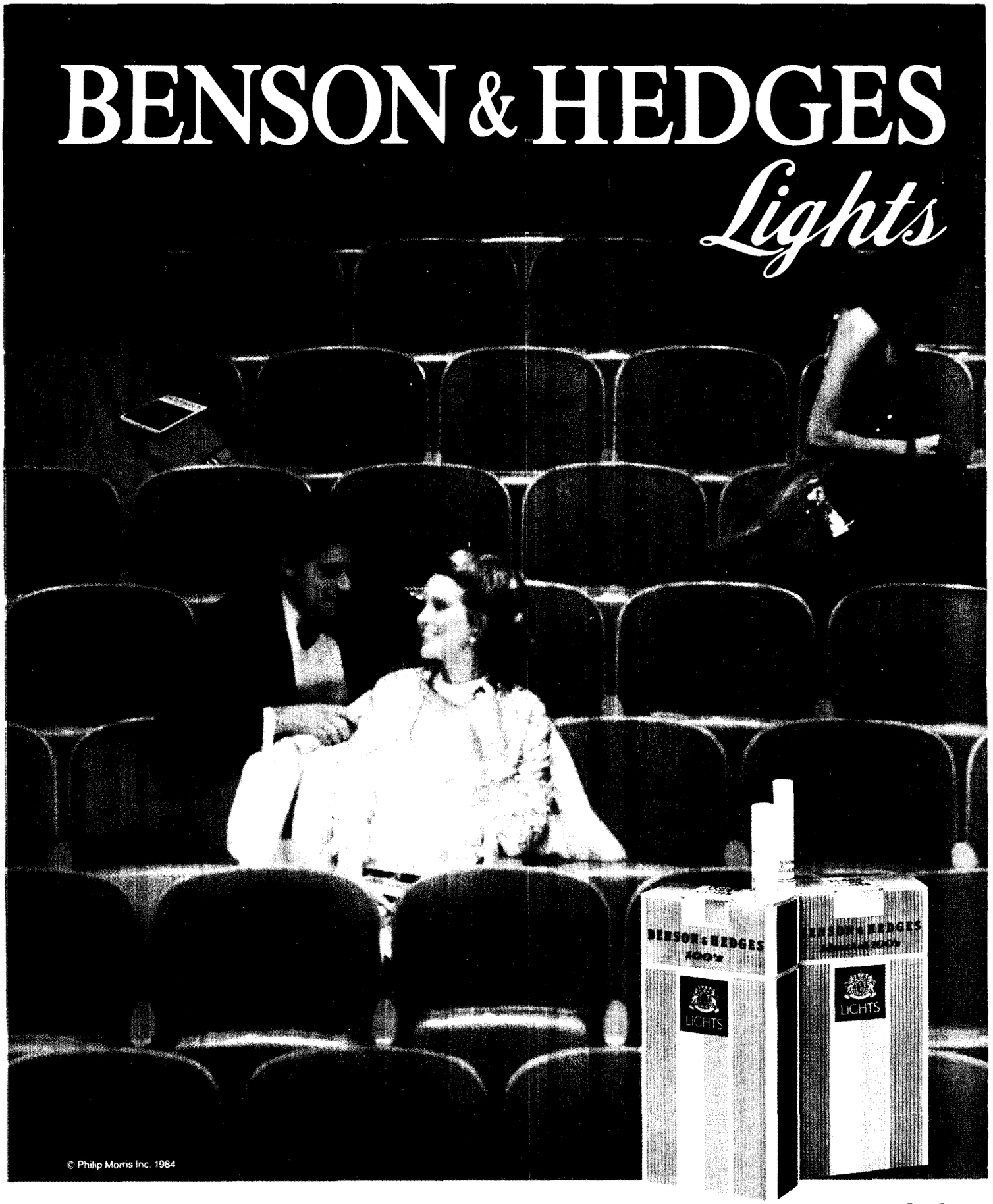

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